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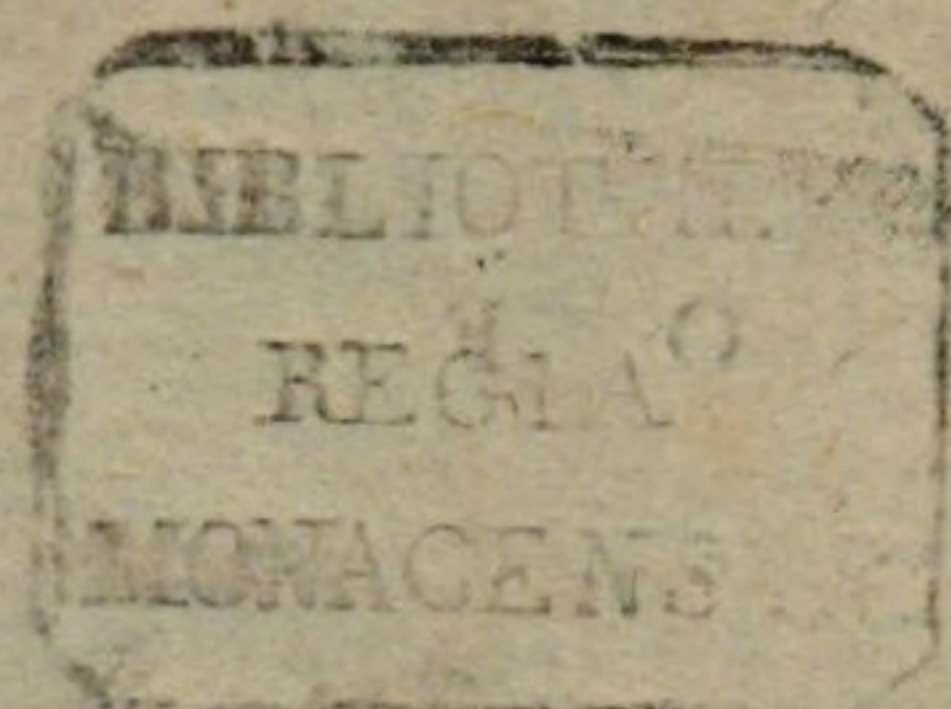
ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

V O L. IV.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR T. CADELL,
IN THE STRAND.

M DCC LXXXVI.



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Know your own Mind:

A

C O M E D Y,

Performed at the

T H E A T R E R O Y A L

I N

C O V E N T - G A R D E N.

———— Pugnat sententia secum;
Quod petiit, spernit; repetit quod nuper omisit;
Æstuat, & vitæ disconvenit ordine toto.

HOR.

Ut callidum ejus ingenium, ita anxium judicium.

TACIT.

VOL. IV.

A

Know your own Mind:

THE GREAT

COMMON

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

By the same Author, a new Edition of the same
Opera, with a new Introduction, and a new
Dedication, &c. &c. &c.

Price

Is sold at the Theatre, and at the following

Booksellers

Vol. IV. A

P R O L O G U E.

Spoken by Mr. LEWIS.

*THROUGH the wide tracts of life, in ev'ry trade,
What numbers toil with faculties decay'd?
Worn out, yet eager, in the race they run,
And never learn——when proper to have done.*

*What need of proofs? Ev'n Authors do the same,
And rather than desist, decline in fame.
Like Gamesters thrive at first; then bolder grow,
And hazard all upon one desp'rate throw.*

*This truth to feel, perhaps too much, inclin'd,
Our Bard, long hackney'd, trembles there behind,
Lest he should prove——another VANISH'D MIND.
Long has his play lain hid, suppress'd by fears,
Beyond the critics rule, ABOVE NINE YEARS!
And now he comes, 'tis the plain simple truth,
This night to answer for his sins of youth.*

*The piece, you'll say, should now perfection bear;
But who can reach it after all his care?
He paints no monsters for ill-judg'd applause:
Life he has view'd, and from that source he draws.*

A 2.

Here

*Here are no fools, the Drama's standing jest !
 And WELCHMEN now, NORTH-BRITONS too may rest,
 HIBERNIA'S SONS shall here excite no wonder,
 Nor shall ST. PATRICK blush to hear them blunder.
 By other arts he strives your taste to hit,
 Some plot, some character ; he hopes, some wit.
 And if this piece should please you like the past ;
 Ye Brother Bards ! forgive him :——'tis his last.*

*Lost are the friends who lent their aid before ;
 ROSCIUS retires, and BARRY is no more.
 Harmonious BARRY ! with what varied art
 His grief, rage, tenderness assail'd the heart ?
 Of plaintive OTWAY now no more the boast !
 And SHAKESPEARE grieves for his OTHELLO lost,
 Oft on this spot the tuneful swan expir'd,
 Warbling his grief ; you listen'd and admir'd.
 'Twas then but fancied woe ; now ev'ry Muse,
 Her lyre unstrung, with tears his urn bedews.*

*From this night's scenes e'n WOODWARD too is fled,
 Stretch'd by pale sickness on his languid bed,
 Nor can THALIA raise her FAVOURITE'S * head.*

* Mr. WOODWARD was to have played the part of DASH-
 WOULD : in his last illness he lamented to the Author, that he
 could not close his theatrical life with that character : he died
 a few weeks after the play appeared ; for years the life of the
 comic scene, and in his end regretted as a worthy and an honest
 man.

*For them our Author lov'd the tale to weave ;
He feels their loss, and now he takes his leave ;
Sees new performers in succession spring,
And hopes new poets will expand their wing.
Beneath your smile his leaf of laurel grew ;
Gladly he'd keep it ;——for 'twas giv'n by you.
But if too weak his art, if wild his aim,
On favours past he builds no idle claim.
To you once more he boldly dares to trust ;
HEAR, and pronounce ;——he KNOWS you will be just.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

MILLAMOUR,	Mr. LEWIS.
DASHWOULD,	Mr. LEE-LEWES.
MALVIL,	Mr. WROUGHTON.
BYGROVE,	Mr. AICKIN.
Captain BYGROVE, his	
Son,	Mr. BOOTH.
Sir JOHN MILLAMOUR,	
Father to Millamour,	Mr. FEARON.
Sir HARRY LOVEWIT,	Mr. WHITFIELD.
CHARLES, Servant to	
Millamour,	Mr. WEWITZER.

Footmen, &c.

W O M E N.

Lady BELL,	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Lady JANE,	Miss DAYES.
Mrs. BROMLEY,	Mrs. JACKSON.
Miss NEVILLE,	Mrs. HARTLEY.
Madam LA ROUGE,	Miss AMBROSE.

Know your own Mind.

A C T the F I R S T.

Scene, the House of Sir JOHN MILLAMOUR.

Enter Sir JOHN, and BYGROVE.

BYGROVE.

WHY then I'd marry again, and disinherit him.

Sir JOHN.

Brother Bygrove, you think too severely in these matters.

BYGROVE.

Severely, Sir John? If I had a mind that my son should marry, why should not he do as I would have him?

Sir JOHN.

Allowance must be made for inclination: The success of our children depends upon the manner, in which we set them out in the world. They are like bowls which, if deliverd out of hand with a due regard to their bias, our aim is answer'd! if otherwise, they are short or wide of the mark in view, or perhaps rush wildly out of the green.

A 4

By-

8 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

BYGROVE.

Well argued, truly! he that should obey is to judge for himself, and you that are his governor, are to be directed by him.

Sir JOHN.

Why he is chiefly interested in the end, and the choice of the means may be fairly left to himself. I can't but be tender of George; a plant of my own rearing, and the tree will hereafter be known by its fruit.

BYGROVE.

It is a tree that will bear nothing without grafting; and if I could not inoculate what will make it thrive and flourish, it should not incumber a foot of my land.

Sir JOHN.

Your system, and mine, differ widely, Brother Bygrove. My son is of an enlarged and liberal understanding, and I a father of mild authority.

BYGROVE.

Authority!—your son's word is a law to you. Now there is my young graceless; he is in the army, and why? Because I chose it. I had a mind he should serve; and so he went to be shot at. No arguing with me. If I see any thing wrong, I accost him directly: Look ye, Sir, do you think to go on in this fashion? Not during my life, I promise you: I will acknowledge you no longer than you prove worthy; and if you can't discern what is befitting you,

you, I at least will judge what is proper on my part.

Sir JOHN.

Well, George and I have lived together as friends. From a boy, I endeavoured to subject him rather to his reason, than his fears. If any little irregularity happened, he was no sooner sensible of it, than his cheek coloured, and the blush of youth not only looked decent, but expressed an ingenuous, and well-disposed mind.

BYGROVE.

But the consequence of all this? Has he a settled opinion? a fixed principle for a moment? He is grown up in caprice; his judgment has not vigour to be decisive upon the merest trifle; he is distracted by little things, and of course is perishing by little and little.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! no; all from a good cause; his knowledge of life occasions quick reflection: quick reflection shews things in a variety of lights. I am not angry. He will settle in the world; you will see him married before long.

BYGROVE.

In what a variety of lights his wife will appear to him!

Sir JOHN.

I beg your pardon, for a moment. I see a person there. Charles, Charles, this way.

Enter

10 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

Enter CHARLES.

Sir JOHN.

Well, Charles, what is he about?

CHARLES.

Very busy, Sir, a thousand things in hand.

BYGROVE.

And all at the same time, I'll warrant.

CHARLES.

We have a deal to employ us, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Have you founded him in regard to what I mentioned last night?

CHARLES.

That's what I wanted to tell your Honour. Last night, Sir, as he was going to bed, I touch'd upon the subject; dropt a hint or two, that it is now time to think of raising heirs to himself; enlarged upon the comforts of matrimony, and I think with no small degree of eloquence.

BYGROVE.

The fellow is laughing at you.

Sir JOHN.

Well, and how? What effect?

CHARLES.

CHARLES.

A very visible effect, Sir. This morning early, my master rings his bell. Charles, says he, I have been considering what you said last night: I shall pay a visit to the young ladies, and, I believe, I shall marry one of them.

Sir JOHN.

There, Mr. Bygrove; I am for ever obliged to you, Charles. Well, go on.

CHARLES.

I fly immediately to get him his things to dress, and return in an instant. Charles, says he, then tossed himself back in his chair, beat the ground with his heel, and fell a reading. Won't your Honour get ready to visit the young ladies?—The ladies? what ladies, you blockhead?—Lady Bell, and Lady Jane, your Honour, Mrs. Bromley's handsome nieces. Po! you're a numskull, says he, with an oblique kind of a smile; stretched his arms, yawned, talked to himself, and bade me go about my business.

BYGROVE.

I knew it would end so. There is not a crane-neck carriage in town can give a short turn with him. He will continue going on from one thing to another, and end in nothing at last.

Sir JOHN.

This is provoking. Any body with him this morning?

CHARLES.

CHARLES.

He has had a power of people with him, Sir—A commission-broker, to sell him a company in a marching regiment; the Mayor of a borough, about a seat in Parliament. And there are several with him now, Sir. There is Sir Harry Lovewit, and——

BYGROVE.

Aye! Sir Harry! I am glad he is of age, and that I am no longer his guardian. He has not had a new idea in his head since he was five years old, and yet the blockhead affects to be lively. He runs after wits, who do nothing but laugh at him. He repeats scraps and sentences; all memory and no understanding; a mere retailer of what falls from other people, and with that stock he sets up for a wit.

CHARLES.

He is with my master, Sir; and there is Mr. Malvil, and Mr. Dashwould; and—(*bell rings*)——He rings, Sir: you will pardon me; I must be gone, Sir.
[Exit.]

BYGROVE.

And that fellow, Dashwould; he is the ruin of your son, and of poor Sir Harry into the bargain. He is the Merry Andrew of the town: honour has no restraint upon him; truth he sets at nought, and friendship he is ever ready to sacrifice to a joke.

SIR JOHN.

Po! mere innocent pleasantry. Dashwould has no harm in him.

By-

BYGROVE.

No harm in him? I grant you the fellow has a quick sense of the ridiculous, and draws a character with a lucky hit. But every thing is distorted by him. He has wit to ridicule you; invention to frame a story of you; humour to help it about, and when he has set the town a laughing, he puts on a familiar air, and shakes you by the hand.

Enter Sir HARRY, laughing violently.

Sir HARRY.

Oh! ho! ho! I shall certainly expire one day, in a fit of laughing.

Sir JOHN,

What's the matter, Sir Harry?

BYGROVE.

What fool's errand brings him hither?

Sir HARRY.

That fellow, Dashwould, will be the death of me. The very spirit of whim, wit, humour, and raillery possess him.

BYGROVE.

Ay! wit and humour for the meridian of your understanding.

Sir HARRY.

By the shade of Rablais, he is the most entertaining

ing creature ! He has played off such a fire-work of wit. I'll tell you what he said this moment.

BYGROVE.

No, Sir, no ; if you are a pedlar in smart sayings, and brisk repartees, we don't desire you to unpack for us.

SIR HARRY.

A plague on him for an agreeable devil ! And then the rogue has so much ease.

BYGROVE.

Yes, the ease of an executioner. He puts all to death, without remorse. He laughs at every thing, as if Heaven intended to make it's own work ridiculous. He has no relish for beauty, natural or moral. He is in love with deformity, and never better pleased, than when he has most reason to find fault.

SIR HARRY.

There is a picture of as harsh features as any in Dashwould's whole collection.

BYGROVE.

But the picture is true. No exaggeration in it.

SIR HARRY.

He gave us a miniature of you, this morning, my dear guardian, and you shall have it. Dashwould has made a discovery, Sir John. What reason do you think he gives for Mr. Bygrove's railing for ever at your son's inconstancy of temper ?

By-

BYGROVE,

Ay, now! now!

Sir HARRY.

You positively shall hear it. Mr. Bygrove's desires being all rusted to a point, looking directly toward the land of matrimony—

BYGROVE.

Matrimony! now gild the pill with humour, and down it goes.

Sir HARRY.

Dashwould has found you out. Mr. Bygrove's desires being all collected and fixed on matrimony, he rails at the variety of my friend Millamour's whimsies, like Sir George Bumper, with chalkstones on his knuckles, as big as nutmegs, hobbling along and thanking *Doctor Le Fevre* that he has no small humours flying about him.

Sir JOHN.

That's a discovery indeed.

BYGROVE.

Sir John, can you mind what such a fellow as Dashwould says? Every thing that passes through the medium of his fancy appears deformed, as the straightest stick looks crooked in troubled water.

Sir HARRY.

Well dashed out, upon my soul, with tolerable spleen, and some vivacity.

By-

BYGROVE.

Po !—if you had taken my advice, Sir Harry, and renounced his acquaintance long ago, you had been now a young man coming into life, with some promise of a character. Continue in dissipation, Sir. For my part, it is a rule with me, neither to give, nor take a joke.

SIR HARRY.

Ho ! ho ! ho ! a pleasant rule, positively—ho ! ho ! ho ! Dashwould shall have it this moment ; do you take the consequence ; and in the mean time I'll leave you to the practise of your social humour.

[Exit.

BYGROVE.

It is such coxcombs as that butterfly, that encourage him to fix his pasquinades upon every man's character. Matrimony ! — a licentious—No, Sir John, I still cherish the memory of your sister ; she was the best of wives : 'sdeath interrupted again by that—No, it's my friend, Malvil ; he is a man of true value.

SIR JOHN.

Dashwould says he is a compound of false charity, and real malice.

BYGROVE.

And it is enough for you that Dashwould says it. Malvil is a man of honour, Sir ; and an enemy to all scandal, though wit prove a palatable ingredient in the poison.

Enter

Enter MALVIL.

MALVIL.

Intolerable ! there is no being safe where he is. A licentious railer ! All truth, all morality sacrificed to a jest : nothing sacred from his buffoonery.

BYGROVE.

I told you, Sir John, how it is.

MALVIL.

Oh ! such indiscriminate satire !

BYGROVE.

Yes, the fellow runs a muck, and nothing escapes him.

MALVIL.

There is no enduring it. Ridicule is a very unfair weapon, Mr. Bygrove : it is by no means the test of truth, Sir John,

Sir JOHN.

Nay, but you are too grave about this matter.

MALVIL.

Too grave ! Shall he wantonly stab the reputation of his neighbour, and then tell you it was in jest ? For my part, I had rather throw a veil over the infirmities of my friend, than seek a malicious pleasure in the detection. That's my way of thinking.

Sir JOHN.

I fancy you are right. This son of mine does so perplex me. (*walks aside*)

MALVIL.

Pray, Mr. Bygrove, give me leave. I am sorry to hear certain whispers about a friend of ours.

BYGROVE.

About whom? the widow, Mrs. Bromley?

MALVIL.

Oh! no, no; I have a great respect for her: though I—Pray don't you think she throws out the lure for a young husband?

BYGROVE.

For a husband, yes; but not too young a one: you can serve my interest in that quarter.

MALVIL.

I know it: rely upon my friendship. But have you heard nothing of an eminent Turkey merchant?

BYGROVE.

Mr. Freeport?

MALVIL.

I say nothing: I don't like the affair: have you really heard nothing?

BYGROVE.

Not a syllable.

MAL-

MALVIL.

So much the better: though it is fit you should be put on your guard. Any money of yours in his hands?

BYGROVE.

Po! as safe as the Bank.

MALVIL.

I may be mistaken. I hope I am: I was in company, the other night; several Members of Parliament present; they did not speak plainly; hints and inuendo's only; you won't let it go any further. His seat in the house, they all agreed, is perfectly convenient at this juncture. I hope the cloud will blow over.—I shall remember you with the widow.

BYGROVE.

One good turn deserves another: I shan't be unmindful of your interest.

MALVIL.

There, now you hurt me: you know my delicacy: must friendship never act a disinterested part? I esteem you, Mr. Bygrove, and that's sufficient. Sir John, give me leave to say, the man who busies himself about other people's affairs, is a pragmatical character, and very dangerous in society.

BYGROVE.

So I have been telling Sir John. But to laugh at every thing is the fashion of the age. A pleasant good-for-nothing fellow is by most people preferred

20 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

to modest merit. A man like Dashwould, who runs on——So! here comes Scandal in folio.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

Sir John, I rejoice to see you. Mr. Bygrove, I kiss your hand. Malvil, have you been uneasy for any friend since?

MALVIL.

Po! absurd! (*walks away*)

DASHWOULD.

I have been laughing with your son, Sir John. Pray, have I told you about Sir Richard Doriland?

BYGROVE.

You may spare him, Sir, he is a very worthy man.

DASHWOULD.

He is so: great good nature about him: I love Sir Richard. You know he was divorced from his wife; a good fine woman, but an invincible idiot.

MALVIL.

Look ye there now, Mr. Bygrove!

BYGROVE.

My Lady Doriland, Sir, was always counted a very sensible woman.

DASHWOULD.

She was so; with too much spirit to be ever at ease,

ease, and a rage for pleasure, that broke the bubble, as she grasped it. She fainted away, upon hearing that Mrs. All-night had two card tables more than herself.

BYGROVE.

Inveterate malice !

DASHWOULD.

They waged war a whole winter, for the honour of having the greatest number of fools thinking of nothing but the odd trick. First, Mrs. All-night kept Sundays ; her Ladyship did the same : Mrs. All-night had forty tables ; her Ladyship rose to fifty. Then one added, then t'other ; 'till every room in the house was cramm'd like the black hole at Calcutta, and at last, upon casting up the account, Sir Richard fold off fifteen hundred acres, to clear incumbrances.

Sir JOHN.

Ridiculous ! and so they parted upon this ?

DASHWOULD.

Don't you know the history of that business ?

MALVIL.

Now mark him ; now.

DASHWOULD.

Tender of reputation, Malvil !—The story is well known. She was detected with—the little foreign Count—I call him the Salamander—I saw him five

times in one winter upon the back of the fire at Bath, for cheating at cards.

MALVIL.

Go on, Sir, abuse every body. My Lady was perfectly innocent. I know the whole affair: a mere contrivance to lay the foundation of a divorce.

DASHWOULD.

So they gave out. Sir Richard did not care a nine-pin for her, while she was his. You know his way: he despises what is in his possession, and languishes for what is not. Her Ladyship was no sooner married to——what's his name?——His father was a footman, and Madam Fortune, who every now and then loves a joke, sent him to the East Indies, and in a few years brought him back at the head of half a million, for the jest's sake.

MALVIL.

Mr. Dashwould, upon my word, Sir,——Families to be run down in this manner!

DASHWOULD.

Mushroon was his name: my Lady Doriland was no sooner married to him, but up to his eyes Sir Richard was in love with her. He dressed at her; sighed at her; danced at her; she is now libelled in the Commons, and Sir Richard has a *crim. con.* against him in the King's Bench.

MALVIL.

Pshaw! I shall stay no longer to hear this strain of defamation.

[Exit.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

Malvil, must you leave us? A pleasant character this same Mr. Malvil.

BYGROVE.

He has a proper regard for his friends, Sir.

DASHWOULD.

Yes, but he is often present where their characters are canvassed, and is anxious about whispers which nobody has heard. He knows the use of hypocrisy better than a Court Chaplain.

BYGROVE.

There, call honesty by a burlesque name, and so pervert every thing.

DASHWOULD.

Things are more perverted, Mr. Bygrove, when such men as Malvil make their vices do their work, under a mask of goodness; and with that stroke we'll dismiss his character.

Sir JOHN.

Ay, very right; my brother Bygrove has a regard for him, and so change the subject. My son, Mr. Dashwould, what does he intend?

DASHWOULD.

Up to the eyes in love with Lady Bell, and determined to marry her.

Sir JOHN.

I told you so, Mr. Bygrove; I told you, you would soon see him settled in the world. Mr. Dashwould, I thank you; I'll step and confirm George in his resolution. [Exit.

DASHWOULD.

A good natured man, Sir John, and does not want credulity.

BYGROVE.

Ay! there, the moment his back is turned.

DASHWOULD.

Gulliver's Travels is a true history to him. His son has strange flights. First, he was to be a lawyer; bought chambers in the Temple, eat his commons, and was called to the bar. Then the law is a damned dry municipal study; the army is fitter for a gentleman; and as he was going to the War-office to take out his commission, he saw my Lord Chancellor's coach go by; in an instant back to the Temple, and no sooner there, "Po! pox! hang the law; better marry, and live like a gentleman." Now marriage is a galling yoke, and he does not know what he'll do. He calls his man, Charles; sends him away; walks about the room, sits down, asks a question; thinks of something else; talks to himself, sings, whistles, lively, pensive, pleasant, and melancholy in an instant. He approves, finds fault; he will, he will not; and in short, the man does not know his own mind for half a second. Here comes Sir John.

Enter

Enter Sir JOHN.

DASHWOULD.

You find him disposed to marry, Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

I hope so; he wavers a little; but still I——

BYGROVE.

Po! I have no patience; my advice has been all lost upon you. I wish it may end well. A good morning, Sir John. (*going*)

DASHWOULD.

Mr. Bygrove, your's: Sir John will defend you in your absence.

BYGROVE:

If you will forget your friends in their absence, it is the greatest favour you can bestow upon them.
[*Exit.*]

DASHWOULD.

Did I ever tell you what happened to him last summer, at Tunbridge?

Sir JOHN.

Excuse me for the present. This light young man! I must step, and talk with my lawyer.

DASHWOULD.

I'll walk part of the way with you. A strange medley this same Mr. Bygrove: with something like
wit,

wit, he is always abusing wit.—You must know, last summer, at Tunbridge—

Sir JOHN.

Another time, if you please. [Exit.

DASHWOULD.

The story is worth your hearing: a party of us dined at the Suffex—(*following Sir John*)

Enter CHARLES.

CHARLES.

Mr. Dashwould! Mr. Dashwould!

Re-enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

What's the matter, Charles?

CHARLES.

My master desires you won't go.

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Hey! what going to leave us?

DASHWOULD.

Only a step with Sir John. Strange vagaries in your master's head, Charles!—Sir Harry! going to wait upon Miss Neville, I suppose. She has beauty, and you have a heart.

Sir

Sir HARRY.

Pshaw! there you wrong me now! Why will you?

DASHWOULD.

Very well; be it so; I can't see to be sure; but take my word for it, you will marry that girl. Come, I follow you.

Sir HARRY.

I must not part with you: I had rather lose the whole College of Physicians. [Exit.

DASHWOULD.

March on, Sir Harry.—(*turns to Charles*) Did you ever see such a Baronet? This fellow, Charles, is as ridiculous himself as any of them. [Exit.

CHARLES.

Now have I but one man in the house, and he will be fifty different men in a moment. Hurry! hurry! nothing but hurry! Get me this; get me that; get me t'other; bring me the blue and silver; scoundrel! what do you fetch me this for? let me have the brown and gold. A poor servant does not know which way to turn himself in this house.

Enter RICHARD.

CHARLES.

Well, Richard, what are you about?

Ri-

RICHARD.

Why a man in a whirlwind may as well tell what he is about. Going to order the coachman to put up. He intends to change his dress, and walk to the Temple. *[Exit.]*

CHARLES.

What does he mean by talking of the Temple again? I hope we are not going to take to our studies once more. I hate the law: there is not a footman in the Temple has a grain of taste. All mere lawyers! They have not an idea out of the profession.

Enter ROBERT.

ROBERT.

Richard! Richard! where is he gone?

CHARLES.

What's in the wind now?

ROBERT.

The wind's in another quarter. He has been writing verses, as he calls them, ever since the company left him. He has torn a quire of paper, I believe, and now he wants the carriage directly.

[Exit.]

CHARLES.

Run, and order it. I had rather be a country curate, than go on in this manner. *(bell rings)* What is he at now?

MIL-

MILLAMOUR. (*within*)

Charles :——who answers there ?

CHARLES,

Ay ; now for the old work.

Enter MILLAMOUR,

MILLAMOUR,

Is the chariot ready ?

CHARLES.

At the door, Sir.

MILLAMOUR.

Do you step to Mrs. Bromley's, and——perhaps it would be better to——No, do you step, Charles, and——you need not mind it——another time will do as well. [*Exit.*]

CHARLES.

There again now : this is the way from morning to night.

MILLAMOUR. (*entering*)

The sooner, the better : I promised Sir John, and I will pay this visit. Lady Bell reigns sovereign of my heart. That vivacity of mind ! “ Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those.”

CHARLES.

She is by far preferable to her sister, your Honour.

MIL.

MILLAMOUR.

Po! you are illiterate in these matters. The sober graces of Lady Jane!—Lady Bell advances like a conqueror, and demands your heart: Lady Jane seems unconscious of her charms, and yet enslaves you deeper.

CHARLES.

Which of them does your Honour think—

MILLAMOUR.

Which of 'em, Charles? (*reads a paper*)
“I look'd, and I sigh'd, and I wish'd I could speak.”

Enter ROBERT.

ROBERT.

Captain Bygrove, Sir.

MILLAMOUR.

That's unlucky. I am not at home; tell him I went out an hour ago.

Enter Captain BYGROVE.

MILLAMOUR.

My dear Bygrove, I longed to see you. But why that pensive air? Still in love, I suppose.

[*Exeunt Charles and Robert.*]

Capt. BYGROVE.

My dear Millamour, you have guessed it. I am in love, and I glory in my chains.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Shall I tell you a secret? I suspect myself, plaguily. Every thing is not as quiet here as it used to be.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Indulge the happy passion. Let wits and libertines say what they will; there is no true happiness, but in the married state.

MILLAMOUR.

Why I have thought much upon the subject of late, and with a certain refinement, I don't know but a man may fashion a complying girl to his taste of happiness. Virtuous himself, he confirms her in her virtue; constant, he secures her fidelity: and by continuing the lover, instead of commencing the tyrant husband, he wins from her the sweetest exertion of tenderness and love. I shall most positively marry. Who is your idol? My dear boy, impart.

Capt. BYGROVE.

There I beg to be excused. You know my father. I must not presume to think for myself. I must contrive some stratagem to make him propose the match. Were it to move first from me, I should be obliged to decamp from before the town at once.

MILLAMOUR.

I wish you success. My resolution is taken, and with the most amiable of her sex. She romps about the room like one of the Graces; and deals about her wit with such a happy negligence——

Capt.

Capt. BYGROVE.

An agreeable portrait, but mine is the very reverse. That equal serenity in all her ways! Wit she has; but without ostentation; and elegance itself seems the pure effect of nature.

MILLAMOUR. (*aside*)

I don't know whether that is not the true character for a wife. And pray, what progress have you made in her affections?

Capt. BYGROVE.

Enough to convince me that I am not quite unacceptable. My dear Millamour, I had rather fold that girl in my arms, than kiss his Majesty's hand for the first regiment of guards.

MILLAMOUR.

I am a lost man. I shall most positively marry. We will wonder at each others felicity; and be the envy of all our acquaintance.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

I am as good as my word, you see. Most noble Captain, your father was here this morning. A good agreeable old gentleman, and about as pleasant as a night mare. Millamour, whom do you think I met since I saw you?

MILLAMOUR,

Whom?

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

Our friend Beverley, just imported from Paris, perfectly frenchified, and abusing every thing in this country—"Oh! there is no breathing their English atmosphere.—Roast beef and liberty will be the death of me."

MILLAMOUR.

Ha! ha! poor Beverley! I saw him, last summer, at Paris, dressed in the stile of an English fox-hunter: he swore there was not a morsel to eat in their country; kept an opera-finger upon beef-stakes and oyster sauce; drove to his villa every Saturday in a phaeton, and returned on the Monday, like a young buck, just come upon town.

DASHWOULD.

He has done his country great honour abroad.

BYGROVE.

He will settle at home now: he is going to be married.

DASHWOULD.

Yes, I hear he is in love, and much good may it do him. I wish I may die, if I know so ridiculous a thing as love.—"My life!—My soul!—Hybla dwells upon her lips; extasy and blifs! blank verse and pastoral nonsense!" In a little time, the man wonders what bewitched him: an arm chair after dinner, and a box and dice till five in the morning, make all the comforts of his life.

MILLAMOUR.

Very true! Love is a ridiculous passion indeed.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Do you take up arms against me? But a moment since, just as you came in, he was acknowledging to me——

MILLAMOUR.

No, not I, truly; I acknowledge nothing. Marriage is not to my taste, I promise you. The handsome wife!—she is all affectation; routs, drums, hurricanes, and intrigue!

DASHWOULD.

And the ugly! she makes it up with good sense; pronounces upon wit; and talks you dead with maxims, characters, and reflections.

MILLAMOUR.

And the woman of high birth, she produces her pedigree, as her patent for vice and folly. “Seven’s the main,” and away goes your whole fortune.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Mere common place.

DASHWOULD.

And the tender maukin! she doats upon you. “Don’t drink any more, my dear: you’ll take cold near that window, my love; pray don’t talk so much; you’ll flurry your spirits”—And then kisses you before company.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

And the sick madam! she has the vapours, and finds that she has nerves.——“ I wish I had none.”——“ But it is too true that I have nerves, as slight as so many hairs.”

DASHWOULD.

Ha! ha! the whole sex is divided into so many classes of folly.

MILLAMOUR.

Right! so it is. Ha! ha! ha! (*both laugh*)

Capt. BYGROVE.

You play finely into one another's hands.

MILLAMOUR.

Now mark the champion of the sex!——

DASHWOULD.

Yes; he'll throw down the gauntlet for 'em.

both laughing.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Nay, decide it your own way. Since you won't hear, gentlemen, there is a clear stage for you.

[*Exit,*

DASHWOULD.

Fare ye well, most noble Captain. A facetious companion! did you ever hear him say any thing?

MILLAMOUR.

He is in for it; and my father would fain reduce
C 2 me

me to the same condition with one of Mrs. Bromley's nieces. A good fine woman, Mrs. Bromley!

DASHWOULD.

Has been! Were she now to rub her cheek with a white handkerchief, her roses and lillies would go to the clear starcher.

MILLAMOUR.

Ha! ha! and yet she sets up for the rival of her nieces.

DASHWOULD.

The young ladies are pretty well in their way too. Lady Bell has a brisk volubility of nothing, that she plays the pretty idiot with: and Lady Jane, a fly piece of formality, ready to go post for Scotland, with the first red-coat that asks her the question. We all dine at the Widow's to day, are you to be with us?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, to meet you: the party will be diverting.

DASHWOULD.

Observe old Bygrove. He pronounces with rigour upon the conduct of others, and hopes his own follies lie concealed. His whole struggle is to escape detection. He hoodwinks himself, and thinks he blinds you. Positive and dogmatical in his opinions, yet a dupe to the designs of others; and flattering himself that a peevish and censorious spirit hides every defect, he gives you the full ridicule of his character.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

I have marked him before now:

DASHWOULD.

Mark him with the widow: you will see him fighting for his deceased wife and Mrs. Bromley's charms at the same time. One eye shall weep for the dead, and the other ogle the living.

MILLAMOUR.

Ha! ha!—And then Malvil laying siege to Miss Neville!

DASHWOULD.

Miss Neville is the best of them. Mrs. Bromley has taken her into her house, as a poor relation, whom she pities; and her pity is no more than the cruel art of tormenting an unhappy dependant upon her generosity.

MILLAMOUR.

But she has generosity. She has promised Miss Neville a fortune of five thousand pounds.

DASHWOULD.

And so the hook is baited for Malvil. The widow flings out that snare, to counteract Sir Harry.

MILLAMOUR.

Sir Harry!

DASHWOULD.

Yes; he is in love with Miss Neville; and the
C 3 best

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best of the story is, he is afraid I shall think him ridiculous. If I say the word, and promise not to laugh at him, he breaks his mind at once. Miss Neville sees clearly that he admires her, and of course will never listen to Malvil. The self interested designs of that fellow shall be disappointed.

MILLAMOUR.

Admirable! thou art a whimsical fellow. Come, I attend you. A pleasant group they are all together. It is as you say,

Our passions sicken, and our pleasures cloy;
A fool to laugh at, is the height of joy.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the FIRST ACT.

A C T

A C T the S E C O N D.

Scene at Mrs. BROMLEY's.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY, and Miss NEVILLE.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

WHY, to be sure, Neville, there is something in what you say: one is so odd, and so I don't know how in a morning.

Miss NEVILLE.

Certainly, madam; and then people of your turn, whose wit overflows in conversation, are liable to a waste of spirits, and the alteration appears sooner in them.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

So it does: you observe very prettily upon things. Heigho! I am as faded as an old lutestring to-day.

Miss NEVILLE.

No indeed, madam, you look very tolerably, considering.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*aside*)

Considering! she grows pert, I think.—I am glad you think me not altogether intolerable.

Miss NEVILLE.

Ma'am!

C 4

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Tolerably ! she is Lady Bell's prime agent. (*aside*)
Has Sir Harry given you hopes lately ?

Miss NEVILLE.

Sir Harry ! I really don't understand why he is
mentioned.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Do you think it will be a match ? And have you
made up your quarrel with Lady Bell ? (*sits down*)

Miss NEVILLE.

The sweetness of her disposition reconciles every
thing.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

And is Millamour reconciled to Lady Bell ?

Miss NEVILLE.

There was only a slight mistake, which I explained.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Oh ! you explained ? that was prudently done ; I
am glad to hear this ; and do you think he loves her ?
Tell me ; tell me all. Why ? why do you think he
loves her ?

Miss NEVILLE.

He cannot be insensible of her merit ; and the
other day he asked me if you were likely to approve
of his proposing for Lady Bell,

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

And you told him. — Well! — what did you tell him?

Miss NEVILLE.

That you, no doubt, would be ready to promote the happiness of so amiable a young lady.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You told him so? (*rises, and walks about*) And so you are turned match-maker: you busy yourself in my family? — Hey! — Mrs. Start-up! you are dizen'd out, I think: my wardrobe has supplied you.

Miss NEVILLE.

Your pardon, ma'am: I had these things in the country, when you first shew'd so much goodness to me.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

What airs! you know I hate to see creatures give themselves airs. Was not I oblig'd to provide you with every thing?

Miss NEVILLE.

You have been very kind; I always acknowledge it.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Acknowledge it! Does not every body know it?

Miss

Miss NEVILLE.

Yes, ma'am, I dare say every body does know it.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

That's maliciously said: I can spy a sneer upon that false face. You suppose I have made my brags. That's what lurks in your ambiguous meaning. I deserve it: deliver me from poor relations.

Miss NEVILLE. (*aside*)

Now the storm begins! I am sure I have said nothing to offend you. I am helpless, it is true, but your relation, and by that tie a gentlewoman still.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I made you a gentlewoman. Did not I take you up in the country, where you lived in the parsonage-house, you, and your sister, with no other company to converse with, than the melancholy tomb-stones, where you read the high and mighty characters of John Hodge, and Deborah his wife? While your father's miserable horse, worn to a shadow with carrying double to the next market-town, limped about, with a dull alms-begging eye in quest of the wretched sustenance, that grew thriftily between the graves? Did not I take you out of your misery?

Miss NEVILLE.

You did, ma'am. (*in a softened tone*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Did not I bring you home to the great house?

Miss

Miss NEVILLE.

You did, ma'am! (*weeps aside*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

And I am finely thanked for it. Warm the snake, and it will turn upon you.

Miss NEVILLE.

I cannot bear to be insulted thus! (*aside*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

So! your spirit is humbled, is it?

Miss NEVILLE.

Give me leave to tell you, madam, that when people of superior fortune, whom Providence has enabled to bestow obligations, claim a right, from the favours they confer, to tyrannize over the hopes and fears of a mind in distress; they exercise a cruelty more barbarous than any in the whole history of human malice.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Is this your gratitude?

Miss NEVILLE.

I could be thankful for happiness, if you permitted me to enjoy it: but when I find myself, under colour of protection, made the sport of every sudden whim; I have a spirit, madam, that can distinguish between real benevolence, and the pride of riches.

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

O brave ! that is your spirit !

Miss NEVILLE.

A spirit, give me leave to say, that would rather, in any obscure corner, submit to drudgery, for a slender pittance, than continue to be an unhappy subject, for cruelty to try its experiments upon.

(*weeps*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I fancy I have been too violent. After all this sower, I must sweeten her a little. Come, dry up your tears : you know I am good-natured in the main. I am only jealous, that you don't seem to love me.

Miss NEVILLE.

Were that left to my own heart, every principle there would attach me to you. But to be dunned for gratitude !——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You are right ; the observation is very just : I am in the wrong.——Come, let us be friends, I have a great regard for you, Neville. (*walks aside*) The creature should visit with me, only she looks so well.——How ! did not I hear Mr. Malvil's voice ? yes, it is he ; I am visible ; I am at home ; shew him in. Walk in, Mr. Malvil.

Enter

Enter MALVIL.

MALVIL.

To a person of sentiment, like you, madam, a visit is paid with pleasure.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You are very good to me. Neville, do you step and bring me the letter that lies upon my table. (*Exit Miss Neville*) I am obliged to go out this morning. (*smiles at Malvil*) She looks mighty well: I have been speaking for you: our scheme will take. Sir Harry will not be able to rival you: she will be your reward for all your services to me.

MALVIL.

Your generosity is above all praise, and so I was saying this moment to Mr. Bygrove: he is coming to wait on you.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

That's unlucky: I wanted to have some talk with you: well, have you seen Millamour?

MALVIL.

Yes, and I find him apt: I have hopes of succeeding.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Hush!—not so loud!—you think me mad, I believe. May I hazard myself with that wild man?

MAL-

MALVIL.

Your virtue will reclaim him. I have a friendship for Millamour, and that is my reason for counteracting the designs of my friend Bygrove.—Mr. Bygrove has desired me to speak favourably of him to your ladyship.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Oh! but he kept his last wife mew'd up in the country; I should certainly expire in the country.

MALVIL.

Why, I can't say much for a country life: you are perfectly right. Rooks and crows about your house; fox-hounds in full cry all the morning; the country 'squires as noisy at dinner as their own hounds; disputes about the game; commissioners of turnpikes, justices of the peace, and pedigrees of horses; "Oroonoko, brother to White Surry, got by Brisk" "Lightning, his dam by Bold Thunder."—That's the whole of their conversation.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Deliver me! it would be the death of me. But don't tell Mr. Bygrove: amuse him with hopes.

MALVIL.

He is a very worthy man. I am sorry to see some oddities in him; but that is very common in life. Vices always border upon virtues. Dashwould says, ---but there is no believing his slander;---he says Mr. Bygrove's sorrow for his deceased wife, is all mere artifice, to weep himself into the good graces of another. But I don't believe it.

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I hear him coming. Do you go and take care of your interest with Neville.

MALVIL.

I obey your commands. (*going*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I shall make her fortune five thousand. Be sure you speak to Millamour. Go, go; success attend you.
[*Exit* MALVIL.]

Enter BYGROVE.

BYGROVE. (*bowing*)

Madam !

Mrs. BROMLEY.

This attention to one in my forlorn state is so obliging——

BYGROVE.

It is a favour on your part to receive a lost, dejected, sprightless——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I admire your sensibility, Mr. Bygrove. That tender look, which you are for ever casting back to a beloved, but irrecoverable object, shews so amiable a sorrow ! oh ! there is something exquisite in virtuous affection.

Enter

Enter Miss NEVILLE.

Is this the letter you want, Madam? (*gives it her*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I thank you, Neville. Yes, there is a luxury in hankering after a valuable person, who has been snatched away. I have found a pleasing indulgence in contemplations of that sort; have not I, Neville?

Miss NEVILLE.

Ma'am!

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Ma'am! are you deaf? Are you stupid? I was telling Mr. Bygrove, what a taking I was in, when poor dear Mr. Bromley died.

Miss NEVILLE.

I was not with you then, Ma'am.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Was not with me! what memories some folks have!—Go, and try if you can recover your memory: leave the room.

Miss NEVILLE.

—Ungenerous, narrow minded woman! [*Exit.*

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Oh! you little know what a profusion of goodness I have lavished on that creature. She returns it all with fullness, with ill-humour; with aversion. She perfectly remembers the affliction I was in, when I lost the best of men.

By-

BYGROVE.

I have had my trials too. Heigho !

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I beg your pardon : I am recalling your afflictions : you should not give way ; you should struggle a little. Heaven knows how I have struggled. I have appeared, indeed, with an air, but it was all struggling. (*looks, and smiles*) I could divert you this morning. Do you know that your son is in love with Lady Jane ?

BYGROVE.

In love ! has he said any thing ?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I don't know as to that ; but I can see what is working in his heart. He is above stairs now : I don't half like his choice : Lady Bell is the proper match for him, and her fortune is the best. An estate, you know, must come to her, by the family settlement. You should direct his choice.

BYGROVE.

This comes of his presuming to think for himself. Has he declared himself ?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Ifancy not ; but he hinted something to me, about a match in my family.

BYGROVE. (*looks at her, and smiles*)

Why, a match in your family has diverted me of
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late—Heigho!—It is the only thing that has entertained me for a long time.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I have had my fancies too. I should like to talk further, but I am engaged abroad, this morning. Can I fet you down? Will you trust yourself with me?

BYGROVE.

You encourage a smile, Madam.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

We shall be the town talk: but let them talk: what need we mind? I will just step and say a word to Neville—You should not be too solitary.

BYGROVE.

So my friends tell me.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I shall be with you in a moment. (*returns*) Do you know that we are very like each other in our tempers? After all, that is the true foundation of lasting friendships. Poor, dear Mr. Bromley! (*going, returns*) It was similitude of temper brought us together; and if ever I could be prevailed upon again, similitude of temper must do it. Well, you have diverted me this morning. Here comes your son, talk to him now. [*Exit.*]

Enter Captain BYGROVE.

BYGROVE.

Well, Sir, what brings you to this house?

Capt.

Capt. BYGROVE.

A morning visit, Sir; merely to kill half an hour.

BYGROVE.

There is nothing I hate so much as hypocrisy. I know your errand; you must pretend to be in love.

Capt. BYGROVE.

I, Sir!

BYGROVE.

What have you been saying to Lady Jane? I thought I had cautioned you against presuming to think for yourself.

Capt. BYGROVE.

You have been very kind in that way.

BYGROVE.

See what comes of your friend Millamour's being left to his own discretion. The ass in the fable, divided in his choice, and still doubting on, till it is too late to resolve, gives but a faint image of him.

Capt. BYGROVE.

And if I, Sir, to avoid his irresolution——

BYGROVE.

You are in the opposite extreme: he thinks too much, and never decides. You never think at all, and so resolve without judgement. Take the advice of your friends before you come here to play the antic tricks of love; to kneel, cringe, fawn, flatter,

and make yourself ridiculous. Do you know enough of the world to judge for yourself? Can you tell what they are all doing in the gay sphere of life? The young are all bred up under the veterans of vice and folly. They see their mothers with autumnal faces, playing the agreeable, and forgetting that they are no longer young. The men are advanced beyond all former bounds, and the women press close after them. A club for the ladies! intrepidity is now the female charm: to compleat their career, there is nothing left but to build a turf Coterie, at Newmarket, and ride their own matches, over the four mile course.

Capt. BYGROVE.

An admirable picture, Sir; Dashwould could not colour it higher.

BYGROVE.

Dashwould! an indiscriminate railer! I speak for your good, and remember, I tell you, you know nothing of the world. After all, Sir; Lady Bell is the person I wish to see you married to;—go, and pay your addresses to her. I will settle that matter for you: you may then marry the person, to whom you have not degraded yourself, by pining, sighing, love verses, and I know not what.

Capt. BYGROVE.

This is all unaccountable to me, Sir. If you will but hear me——

Enter MALVIL.

BYGROVE.

No, Sir, no; I won't allow you to fetch a single
sigh,

sigh, till I say the word ; when I give leave, you may then go and sigh till your heart is ready to break. I'll hear no more ; no parlying with me. Leave the house, this moment.

Capt. BYGROVE.

I obey.

[*Exit.*

MALVIL.

I interrupt you.

BYGROVE.

No, no ; I am glad to see you. Well, have you had any opportunity with the widow ?

MALVIL.

I have ; she surprizes me a little : she has dropt the mask. I did not think she had been so eager to marry. We had some talk about you. You know my heart : I am always true to my friends : I see but one difficulty : she will never agree to live in the country.

BYGROVE.

The lover need not dispute that point, whatever the husband may do hereafter.

MALVIL.

Very true ; and besides, though I am not inclined, with the malicious part of the world, to suspect her virtue, yet this town has temptations. It grieves me to see the ways of this great city ; fine women without principle ; friends without sincerity : marriages

to day, divorces to-morrow; whole estates set upon the cast of a die; masquerades without wit or humour; new comedies that make you cry, and tragedies that put you to sleep: It grieves me to see all this. You are in the right to prefer good sense and tranquility in the country.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY, and Miss NEVILLE.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I beg your pardon, gentlemen. Neville, mind what I say to you: don't let those giddy girls go out in my absence; to walk in the Green Park, or run to hideous painters, under pretence of seeing odious pictures, that they may have an interview with more odious originals. Keep them at home; I will reward your pains. *Allons,, Mr. Bygrove.* (*Exit BYGROVE.*) Come, Mr. Malvil.

MALVIL.

Had not I better stay, and——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

No, no; come now, you may return to her.

[*Exit.*

MALVIL. (*to Miss NEVILLE.*)

You see that I am torn from you; but I shall return as soon as possible.

[*Exit.*

Miss NEVILLE.

Tyrannical woman! some virtues she has; but they are overshadowed by their opposite qualities. Her love of praise, is a gross appetite of flattery.
She

She oppresses with kindness, and her very civilities are sure to be disobliging. Oh! state of dependance! for mere support, to be subject every hour to caprice and arrogance!—Is it pride that makes me feel with this sensibility?—No, my heart can answer it is not. I can bow to the hand that relieves me; but I cannot stoop to the servile office of pampering vanity and ostentation, with low and fulsome flattery. What does Lady Bell mean by talking to me of Sir Harry? She does it—I know her goodness—she does it to soften affliction, and, if possible, divert a mind, depressed with sorrow. Sir Harry never threw away a thought on me. He behaves, indeed, with marked civility; but I don't know what to think of him. I must not aspire too high: no, I have no pretensions.

Enter Lady JANE.

Lady JANE.

Miss Neville, I am very angry with you. What is the matter? Has any thing made you uneasy?

Miss NEVILLE.

No; I am not remarkable for high spirits, you know.

Lady JANE.

Why would not you give us your company? How can you be so cross? That sister of mine is the veriest madcap!

Miss NEVILLE.

Lady Bell is rather lively to be sure.

Lady JANE.

But when she once begins, she hazards every thing, and talks sometimes like a very libertine.

Miss NEVILLE.

The overflowing of gaiety, and good humour.

Lady JANE.

I wish she would restrain herself a little. Madam La Rouge is with her : she has the sweetest Point eyes ever beheld. I was endeavouring to cheapen it, but Lady Bell was so troublesome ; she called me a thousand prudes, and will have it that nothing runs in my head, but a lover.

Miss NEVILLE.

I don't know but she may be right. We are apt to deceive ourselves. We talk of vapours, and fidgets, and retirement, but it is often artful, sly, insinuating man, that lurks at the bottom.

Lady JANE.

Well, I vow you'll make me hate you.

Miss NEVILLE.

Has Captain Bygrove made no disturbance in your heart ?

Lady JANE.

How can you ? You are as great a plague as my sister. As I live and breathe, the giddy romp is coming. You must take my part.

Enter

Enter Lady BELL.

Lady BELL. (*repeating*)

*Yes, I'm in love, I own it now,
And Cælia has undone me;
And yet, I swear, I can't tell how,
The pleasing plague stole on me.*

What would I give to have some miserable swain talk in that style of me? "Belinda has undone me;" charming!

Miss NEVILLE.

A lively imagination is a blessing, and you are happy, Lady Bell.

Lady BELL.

I am so: but then I am not talked of: I am losing all my time.

Lady JANE.

Why, you bold creature! I hate to hear you talk with so much intrepidity.

Lady BELL.

Prudery! my dear sister, downright prudery! I am not for making mysteries of what all the world knows.

Lady JANE.

And how do I make mysteries pray?

Lady

Lady BELL.

Why, you confident thing, I'll prove it against you.

Lady JANE.

But what? what? what will you prove?

Lady BELL.

That you are ready to jump out of your little wits for a husband, my demure, sober sister. Miss Neville, a poet is not more eager for the success of a new comedy, nor one of his brother poets more desirous to see it fail, than that girl is to throw herself into the arms of a man.

Lady JANE.

All scandal, sister.

Lady BELL.

Miss Neville shall be judge.

Lady JANE.

Your story is mere invention.

Lady BELL.

Was there ever such a wrangler?

Lady JANE.

You'll not make good your words.

Lady BELL. (*pats her hand*)

Hold your tongue, Miss, will you?

Lady JANE.

Very well, go on.

Lady

Lady BELL.

Will you have done? Now mind, Miss Neville. She does not want to be married, she says. The other night, my young madam, whose thoughts are always composed and even, went to sleep as soon as we got to bed, and then her busy imagination went to work with all the vivacity of an intriguing chamber-maid.

Lady JANE.

And how can you tell that, pray?

Lady BELL.

Out of your own mouth you shall be judged. Miss Neville, she talked in her sleep, like a beauty in a side box, and then fell a singing,

*No, no; he is true, and I believe;
He look'd, he sigh'd, he can't deceive;
No, no; I have conquer'd; he is mine;
My heart is touch'd, and I resign.*

Lady JANE.

Oh! you scurrilous creature.

Miss NEVILLE.

Fairly caught, Lady Jane.

Lady JANE.

All odious slander; you judge of me by yourself.

Lady BELL.

I do so. I mean to be married, and am frank enough to own it. But you may let "concealment
feed

60 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

feed on your damask cheek." My damask cheek, I hope, was made for other purposes.

Lady JANE.

Gracious ! there is no bearing this. What a mad girl you are !

Lady BELL.

Not in the least. A natural character. One would not, to be sure, tell a hideous man that one loves him : but when one has encouraged him by degrees, and drawn him on, like a new glove, and perhaps done him a mischief in the doing it, why then one would draw him off again, and may be ask a pretty fellow to help a body ; and then the wretch looks so piteous, and kneels at your feet ; then rises in a jealous fit. " I take my everlasting farewell ; never
" to return ; no, never ; what to her ? who encouraged me ? encouraged him ? who promised ?
" broke her promise ? The treacherous, faithless,
" dear, deluding"—then returns in an instant ; hands dangling ; eyes imploring ; tongue faltering ;
" Lady Bell,—Lady Bell—when you know that I
" adore you"—And I burst out into a fit of laughter in his face : oh ! that's my joy, my triumph, my supreme delight.

Lady JANE.

And is not there a kind of cruelty in all this ?

Lady BELL.

Oh ! your very humble servant, my sweet Lady Graveairs. Cruelty ! The difference between you and me, sister, is this ; you deny your love to your female friends, and own it to the man ; now I deny
it

it to him, but among ourselves, I fairly own that Miss Neville is not more impatient to be married to Sir Harry, than I to——

Miss NEVILLE.

Who, I? Spare me, I beg of you. Why Sir Harry?

Lady JANE.

Now, now, your turn is come. Never spare her, sister?

Miss NEVILLE.

You must excuse me, I am not in spirits for all this raillery. (*going*)

Lady JANE.

You shan't leave us.

Miss NEVILLE.

Give me leave; I beg you will. I'll go and talk to Madam La Rouge. Perhaps I may succeed for you. [*Exit.*]

Lady JANE.

Well, if you must go.—How you run on, sister! And are you really in love?

Lady BELL.

Over head and ears.

Lady JANE.

With whom?

Lady

Lady BELL.

Not with Capt. Bygrove: how alarmed you are!
With Millamour, sister.

Lady JANE.

Fix that roving temper, if you can; he will be
on his knees to you, and the first pair of black eyes
that enters the room will be through his heart.

Lady BELL.

As to that, I give myself very little trouble: but
if I could once catch him paying his adoration to me,
my aunt Bromley does not raise and sink poor Miss
Neville's spirits with such exquisite skill in the art of
tormenting, as I should his. I should use him as the
men do their punch; a little more sweet; a little
more sour; a little more spirit; more acid again;
then perhaps say it's good for nothing, and then,
perhaps——

Lady JANE.

What?

Lady BELL.

Sip it up at last, as you would do at first. You
wicked girl, how could you ask me such a question?
Law! what am I about? I have a thousand things
to do.

Enter Miss NEVILLE, and Madam LA ROUGE.

LA ROUGE.

Ah! my Lady! always so gay; English climate
no

no effect upon you. *De manieres de Paris* for all de vorl. *En verite, vous est charmante.*

Lady BELL.

Oh! Madam La Rouge, you say such polite things; but you rob me of all my money. My sister is rich: you had better deal with her. Sister, you'll be married before me. (*sings*)

“ No, no, he is true, and I believe, &c. [Exit.

Lady JANE.

Was ever any thing so crazy?

LA ROUGE.

It is all *vivacite*! and, my Lady, you have ver great wit *en partage*; *vous avez les graces*; you have de grace; but you no deal vid me.

Lady JANE.

I shall call at your house in Pall-mall. Miss Neville, you joined against me, I am very angry with you. [Exit.

LA ROUGE.

Mademoiselle, I tell you; persuade my Lady to have de lace, and you come to my house, me give you ver pretty present.

Miss NEVILLE.

Oh! you have a national talent for applying a little bribery.

LA

LA ROUGE.

Diantre ; 'tis false delicateſſe. You not know de manieres of the vorl.—*Ab ! Monsieur Malvil !*

Enter MALVIL.

MALVIL.

Madam La Rouge. I did not expect this pleaſure.

La ROUGE.

It is always pleaſure to ſee *mes amis* ; to ſee my friends ; and I glad to ſee you here vid de Lady. You have ver good choice. And I can tell you, make de diſpatch : you have rival.

MALVIL.

Rival !

La ROUGE.

You not know ? Sir Harry have taſte as well as you. Madamoifelle, you are ver great favourite.

Miss NEVILLE.

A favourite ! keep your vivacity for ſome other ſubject : don't make me the town talk.

La ROUGE.

It is ver true : He come to my houſe in Pall-mall, and ſay ver fine ting of Madamoifelle Neville, and Monſieur Daſhwould praife you ver much.

MALVIL. (*aſide*)

Ay, his malice is at work.

LA

LA ROUGE.

Monfieur, you lofe all your time—(*goes to him and speaks low.*) You wait de fortune from Madam Bromley: Sir Harry vil take her vidout any money at all. Vat you flow for?

MALVIL.

Are the apartments kept ready at your houfe?

LA ROUGE.

De apartment it is ready. You take it two, tree week ago, and pay de rent for noting—I leave you vid de lady; and I go mind mes affaires. Bon voyage. [*Exit.*]

MALVIL.

I have difengaged myself, to have the honour of attending you.

Miss NEVILLE.

Your attention is thrown away. Did not I hear Mr. Millamour's voice?

MALVIL.

Yes; he came with me; he is gone into the next room to pay his compliments to Lady Jane. I am forry to fee him for ever distracted; always resolving, and yet every day beginning the world over again. You look chagrin'd, what has disturb'd you?

Miss NEVILLE.

The old ftory; Mrs. Bromley's eternal whims.

MALVIL.

She is not spoken of as I could wish. Good natured and arrogant, generous and cruel, obliging and oppressive, at the same time.

Miss NEVILLE.

There cannot, surely, be a more distressful situation than to remain under daily obligations, and yet not be able to esteem our benefactors.

MALVIL.

Your delicacy charms me: It has fixed me yours. I long for nothing so much, as to see you out of her power. They have a strange report about town: people will be talking: the whisper goes that Mr. Bygrove, amidst all his grief, is sily in a hurry for another wife. Mrs. Bromley they say, encourages him; and at the same time has a design upon my friend Millamour.

Miss NEVILLE.

The world is not always wrong.

MALVIL.

Malice will be busy; and does not spare the young ladies.

Miss NEVILLE.

If any thing is said to their disadvantage, believe me, they do not deserve it.

MALVIL.

I dare say not: I don't think they are too forward.
I am

I am sorry to see, in one of the papers, to-day, a character of Sir Harry, not at all favourable. His little follies, his whims, and caprices one does not mind : He may walk in Dashwould's train as long as he pleases ; that only makes him ridiculous. But it grieves me to hear that perfidy stains his character, and, as I am told, the worst of perfidy : the ruin of beauty and innocence, is his ruling passion.

Miss NEVILLE.

This is very odd : somebody has been at the trouble of sending me an anonymous letter to that very effect : and why to me ? I am not able to decypher.

MALVIL.

I don't like anonymous letters. In general they aim at mischief, but this perhaps, is meant as a caution to you : it must be a friend that sent it.

Miss NEVILLE.

No ; I can guess the quiver from whence that arrow comes.

MALVIL.

Dashwould, perhaps ?

Miss NEVILLE.

I don't say that.

MALVIL.

Nor I ; I never charge any body ; but upon recollection, the letter in the news-paper is imputed to him. Mrs. Bromley, I know, has no opinion of Sir Harry. His designs, with regard to you, she does

not think honourable. My heart interests me for you. You know I am all hearr. The plan which Mrs. Bromley has proposed——Hark! I think I hear Millamour coming. I'll follow you up stairs.

Miss NEVILLE.

Oh! Sir! you have frighten'd me out of my wits.
[Exit.

MALVIL.

She loves Sir Harry, I see; and yet she shan't slip thro' my hands. I can set on Mrs. Bromley to lead her a weary life, and if I can prevail upon Millamour to renounce Lady Bell, and marry the widow, my business is done. When Miss Neville is heartily tormented by Mrs. Bromley, affliction softens the mind, and I may then decoy her away, and stand upon terms with the family. But Dashwould's wit will fly about. No matter: he is a sad scoundrel, and does not mind how he murders reputations. So! here comes Millamour. I must get clear of him, and talk further with Miss Neville.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

From this moment I blot all other woman from my memory. Malvil, with me joy. The perplexity of choice is now at an end.

MALVIL.

Why, what has happen'd?

MILLAMOUR.

Lovely Lady Jane. And yield her charms of
mind

mind with sweet delay."—I can't stay to tell you now.

MALVIL.

Nor will I stay to interrupt your raptures. You know, I wish you success. *[Exit.]*

Enter Lady BELL.

Lady BELL. *(reading)*

Who yields too soon, must soon her lover lose,
Would you restrain him long? then long refuse.

MILLAMOUR. *(looks at her, and smiles.)*

There is something commanding in that air of vivacity.

Lady BELL. *(reads)*

" Oft at your door let him for entrance wait,
There let him——"

How! Millamour here! how could you surprize me so? You horrid thing! how long have you been here?

MILLAMOUR.

Been, Madam?—I have been—I have been in the next room, paying my respects to your sister.

Lady BELL.

And never enquired for poor Lady Bell?

MILLAMOUR.

Your Ladyship wrongs me. You do injustice to your own charms: they can never be forgot.

Lady BELL.

I see how it is : the other day you was lifted in my service, and now a defarter to my sifter ! you are right, you would have been upon hard duty with me.

MILLAMOUR.

Any duty but a forlorn hope would be——

Lady BELL.

Hope !—why fure, you would not have had the intolerable assurance, to entertain the smallest degree of hope ? My sifter, I suppose, has given you some hope. Ay ! that's her way : She moves by fettled rules, and shines with equal light. Now I——I am a mere comet, I blaze of a sudden ; dazzle for a while, then wheel away, and am thought of no more.

MILLAMOUR.

That gaiety of hers is charming. (*aside*) The impression your ladyship makes——

Lady BELL.

Words ; mere words ;—No ; I am a strange piece of wild nature ; never the same for two minutes together. Now, my sifter, she is a Prussian blue, holds her colour, and is always the same.—I—I am a more changeable filk—I shift about, and display my wit, and my folly, so curiously blended, that no body can tell where one begins, or the other ends. I am not worth your notice. (*walks, and hums a tune*)

MIL-

MILLAMOUR. (*looking at her*)

She has described herself admirably; without variety, a woman is a downright piece of insipidity.

Lady BELL.

Yes; I have my whims. Never the same for two minutes together. Now I love to give a scope to folly, and the men say, "curse catch her, she pleases more, when in the wrong, than other women when they are in the right. Then good sense is the word; and the next moment I can't bear the fatigue of thinking; why won't somebody write a comedy to divert me? Then all spirit, and I long to lead up the ball."

*Ladies, like variegated tulips show,
'Tis to their weakness all their charms they owe,
(sings, and walks about.)*

MILLAMOUR. (*aside*)

Lady Jane is mere mediocrity compared to her.

Lady BELL.

Lord! I run on at a strange rate. Yours, Mr. Millamour: Au revoir. (*going*)

MILLAMOUR.

A moment longer: you must not leave me. You possess my heart: possess it without a rival.

Lady BELL.

Hey! what's the matter now?

MILLAMOUR.

Do not trifle with a passion sincere as mine. I
E 4 adore

72 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

adore you, my Lady Bell; adore your matchless charms; thus on my knees adore.

Lady BELL.

Stay, stay; let me see what the poet says, (*reads quick.*)

*Oft at your door, let him for entrance wait,
There let him kneel, and threaten and entreat.*

There, stay there; don't offer to stir. Now put up both your hands, and pray, pray, have compassion, Lady Bell. [*Exit, laughing.*

MILLAMOUR.

She flies disdainful from her lover's view,
Yet looks and bids him, as she flies, pursue,

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T the T H I R D.

Enter Lady JANE, and Capt. BYGROVE.

Lady JANE.

AND laid his commands upon you to address my sister?

Capt. BYGROVE.

Most peremptorily.

Lady JANE.

You have obey'd him, I hope.

Capt. BYGROVE.

You know your power too well; you know that I am devoted to you, and that my happiness depends upon the promise you have made me.

Lady JANE.

There, that is always the way with you men: our smiles, are sure marks of approbation; and every civil thing we say, is construed into a promise.

Capt. BYGROVE.

And have not you promised?

Lady JANE. (*looks at him, and smiles*)

Need I answer that question? How easily frightened you are! but you have some reason to be alarmed. Millamour, has been on his knees to me, breathing such raptures——

Capt.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Ay!—who has set him on?—what can be at the bottom of this?—And have you listened to him?—Here comes Dashwould; he perhaps can explain—

Lady JANE.

He will only laugh at us; and so I'll make my escape. (*going*)

Capt. BYGROVE:

Not to hear Millamour, again, I hope. (*takes her band.*)

Lady JANE.

Well, well, to purchase my liberty, you need not fear. I have received his vows, delivered with such ardour!—how terrified you look?—I have listened to him, to alarm my sister with an idea of Millamour's growing passion for me. If her jealousy is once touched, it may fix her resolution. At present, she is as volatile as Millamour himself.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

As volatile as Millamour! what can that be? I never knew any thing that would bear a comparison.

Lady JANE.

What think you of my sister?

DASHWOULD.

Lady Bell has her whims. I left her above stairs, in close conference with Millamour; he has deserted your Ladyship already. Mrs Bromley will be the next,

next, I hope: your father, Captain, would grieve more for that, than for his deceased wife.

Lady JANE.

And then Miss Neville's turn may come.

DASHWOULD.

Oh! no. To sport with her would be inhumanity. But a brisk widow, is fair game.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Yes, and it may help to cure my father of his folly.

Lady JANE.

It would be sport, but I despair of it. You know, Mr. Dashwould, you allow that Millamour has understanding.

DASHWOULD.

But he does not act from his understanding. Fits and starts of passion govern him. If in any one pursuit of real use, he had half the alacrity of mind, with which he runs on, from one folly to another, he would be a man for the ladies to pull caps for. But he lives for ever in inconsistencies. One action of his life is the sure forerunner of the contrary. First Malvil is his favourite! then arm in arm with me. Can any two things be more opposite? It is the same among the ladies! they all have him by turns, and the whim of one moment, is sure to find a ridiculous antithesis in the next.

Lady JANE.

He sat for that picture, I'll swear.—Well there's a gentleman wants your advice, and so I'll leave you together.

[Exit.

Capt. BYGROVE.

My dear Dashwould, you must assist me.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

What distresses you?

Capt. BYGROVE.

My evil genius is at work. You know what my father has resolved upon. Lady Bell is the person he chuses for me.

DASHWOULD.

I know all that business: a counterplot of the widow's fertile brain, to disappoint Lady Bell, and wreak her malice on Millamour.

Capt. BYGROVE.

But the malice falls on me only. Why will not Millamour know his own mind? Lady Bell loves him, I know she does. I am thwarted in the tenderest point; what must be done?

DASHWOULD.

Do as they would have you: you ensure success. Millamour's jealousy takes fire upon the first alarm, and while the passion holds, he will have vigour enough to act decisively.

Capt. BYGROVE.

May I hazard the experiment?

DASHWOULD.

It's a sure card. Take my advice.

Enter Miss NEVILLE.

Miss NEVILLE.

Mrs. Bromley's coach has just stopp'd at the door: had not you better step up stairs, gentlemen?

Enter

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Dashwould, you are absent too long. They are all as dull as a funeral, above stairs.

DASHWOULD. (*aside to* Capt. BYGROVE)

How the Baronet follows Miss Neville from room to room!—Come, Captain, I'll play a game of picquet with you before dinner.—Allons!

[*Exit with* Capt. BYGROVE.

Sir HARRY.

If I might have the liberty, ma'am, to——

Miss NEVILLE.

Another time, if you please, Sir Harry. Mrs. Bromley is coming: I hear her voice.

Sir HARRY.

And you promise me the hearing?

Miss NEVILLE.

You are intitled to it, Sir. I beg you'll leave me w.

Sir HARRY.

I obey your commands; I am gone; you'll remember.
[*Exit.*

Miss NEVILLE.

Here she comes; and I think in good humour.

Enter

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Oh! I am heartily tired. I have been paying visits to people who have never been let into my house, and who, I hope, will never be at home for me. I hate them all, but out of civility, we must keep up an acquaintance. Where are the girls? Has any body been here?

Miss NEVILLE.

Mr. Millamour, ma'am, and the rest of the gentlemen that dine here: they are all above stairs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Stupidity! did not I give orders——How long has Millamour been here?

Miss NEVILLE.

About an hour.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

With Lady Bell, I suppose——Thou base ingratitude! and Sir Harry is here too, I reckon. Does your match go on? You shall go back to the country, I promise you. You'll be the ruin of those girls. They shall have no visitors, when my back is turned. I'll give orders to all the servants this very moment. (*going*)

Enter Sir JOHN MILLAMOUR.

Sir JOHN.

To see Mrs. Bromley looking so well——

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You are very polite, Sir. Business calls me now,
Sir John; I beg your pardon. [Exit.

Sir JOHN.

Has my son been here to-day?

Miss NEVILLE.

He is above stairs with Lady Bell, Sir.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*within*)

Miss Neville, Neville, I say.

Miss NEVILLE.

You'll excuse me, Sir John; what can she want?
[Exit.

Sir JOHN.

This visit portends some good, I hope. I shall be
happy if he has declared himself. I'll step and see
what he is about. (*going*)

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

Exquisite! lovely angel!

Sir JOHN.

Well!—how!—what!

MILLAMOUR.

I beg your pardon, Sir; I am not at leisure; I
am

80 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

am in the third region; and can't descend to the language of the nether world.

Sir JOHN.

Then you are in love, George.

MILLAMOUR.

She is a sister of the Graces, and surpasses the other three. I am fixed; unalterably fixed; and am going about the marriage articles directly.

Sir JOHN.

They are at my lawyer's, ready engrossed; and only wait for the lady's name, to fill up the blanks.

MILLAMOUR.

I know it, Sir: I must step for them; I have it through my heart: I feel it here: I am your humble servant, Sir. (*going*)

Sir JOHN.

No, no; do you stay here; I'll step for Mr. Copyhold. The writings shall be here in ten minutes.

[*Exit*]

MILLAMOUR.

The sooner the better, Sir.

*Let those love now, who never lov'd before;
Let those who always lov'd, now love the more.*

(*sings*) Loll, tol, lol.

Enter

Enter MALVIL.

MALVIL.

Bravo! you seem in prodigious spirits.

MILLAMOUR.

I am so: I am happy in myself, and happy in my friends, and happy in every circumstance, and in tip-top spirits, and—my dear Malvil, your's down to the ground.

MALVIL.

Methinks, I sympathize with you. When our friends are happy, the sensation is well called a fellow feeling.

MILLAMOUR.

Malvil, I thank you; your turn of mind is formed for lasting friendships. With Dashwould it is all dissipation, and giddy mirth, the mere bubble of pleasure. To you, I may talk seriously. The topic of the day is enough for Dashwould. I can now tell you, that I shall be happy for life. — But for Dashwould, I should have been settled long ago. That fellow has led me into a thousand errors.

MALVIL.

He has his admirers, and not without reason. He thinks me his enemy, but he is mistaken. I never harbour resentment.

MILLAMOUR.

You are growing grave, and I am a flight above common sense at present.

MALVIL.

Dashwould, notwithstanding all his faults, does hit the mark sometimes. I don't usually laugh at his pleasantry; I don't like to encourage him too much; but it must be owned, he is often right. Behind his back I cannot help being diverted by him. He has a quick insight into characters.

MILLAMOUR.

No want of penetration there.

MALVIL.

No, no; he says, and perhaps rightly, your lively ladies often want common prudence; and giddy in the pursuit of pleasure, they are frequently miserable in the end.

MILLAMOUR.

But Lady Bell's good sense, that refinement of understanding——

MALVIL.

There are false refinements; the shadow for the substance. Who is it that observes, we all discover early symptoms of the disease, by which our minds and bodies go to ruin?

MILLAMOUR.

Po! with Lady Bell there can be no risk.

MAL-

MALVIL.

I don't know whether Dashwould is good authority.—You know him best. He says——

MILLAMOUR.

Well!

MALVIL.

He is a shrewd observer.

MILLAMOUR.

Nobody more so.

MALVIL.

If he has a regard for any body, it is for you. You are the only man I never heard him speak ill of. A match with Lady Bell is not to his mind. He talked seriously on the subject. Has not he told you?

MILLAMOUR.

Not a syllable

MALVIL.

I wonder at that. Lady Bell, he says, shew'd herself early. Impatient of advice, attentive to nothing but her beauty! whole days at her looking glass—I repeat his very words—he seemed to speak out of downright regard for you.—At her toilette every feature had its instructions how to look; but no instruction for the mind. And then, says he, that terrible love of gaming!

MILLAMOUR.

Gaming!

MALVIL.

Don't you know it? I can't say I ever saw it myself. Time will determine her character.

MILLAMOUR.

If she loves gaming, it is pretty well determined already.

MALVIL.

Perhaps not: I still hope for the best.

MILLAMOUR.

Why yes; a man of sense may form her mind, and then the gentler affections may take their turn.

MALVIL:

The very thing I said.—But our pleasant friend had an answer ready—Gentle affections, says he! don't you see that it is with people that once love play, as with persons addicted to strong cordials? they never return to cooler liquors.

MILLAMOUR.

There is some truth in that. I am for ever obliged to you. It is ingenuous, it is friendly of you to convey the hint.

MALVIL.

Don't build too much upon it. I have told you my author; and you know his way: he may deny it all.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Shall I talk to him?

MALVIL.

I don't know what to say to that. In his vein of pleasantry, he may give it another turn.

MILLAMOUR.

He may so. I am glad to know all this. But my Lady Jane, there's a model for her sex to imitate.

MALVIL.

Have you watched her well? People should appear what they really are. Let a precipice look like a precipice. When coverd over with flowers, it only serves to deceive the unwary. Mrs. Bromley has been very communicative about Lady Jane.

MILLAMOUR.

You alarm me. My dear friend explain.

MALVIL.

To do Lady Bell justice, she is above disguise. And tho' she has her faults, I have seen her please by those very faults.

MILLAMOUR. (*smiling*)

And so have I. Her very blemishes are beauty spots.

MALVIL.

No frankness about the youngest girl. It is frind-
F 3 ship

ship for you that makes me speak. Her character is all forced, studied, put on with her rouge.

MILLAMOUR.

Does she paint?

MALVIL.

A little; the prudent touch. I am sorry for her. When she is settled in the world, many qualities, which now lie concealed, will break out into open day-light.

MILLAMOUR.

What a masked battery there will be to play off upon a husband!

MALVIL.

Their aunt told me all in confidence. You may judge how painfull it is to her. I have known the family for some time. I can't but be sorry for the young ladies.

MILLAMOUR.

And since this is the case, I don't care how little I know of them, or their family.

MALVIL.

No occasion to quarrel with the family. Great merit about Mrs. Bromley. She made an admirable wife, and that at an early period. She was but seventeen when she married.

MILLAMOUR.

No more?

MAL-

MALVIL.

Not an hour : she is not thirty : an estate in her own right, and the command of half a borough. No opposition there ; the old houses have the votes. A man may get a seat without trouble. Does not Sir John want to see you in parliament ?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes. It would give him pleasure.

MALVIL:

Well, you will judge for yourself. Were I as you, I should know what course to take. Here she comes ! a good fine woman ! a man may there sit down to his happiness at once.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY,

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mr. Millamour, (*curtsies*) Mr. Malvil, what have you done with Mr Bygrove ?

MALVIL.

I parted with him where you set us down. (*speaks to her aside*) I have talked to Millamour, and I think it will do.

Mrs. BROMLEY:

Go you up stairs. (*aside to Malvil*)

MALVIL.

How charmingly you look ! like Lady Bell's eldest sister !

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Po! you are laughing at me.

MALVIL.

Not I truly: I appeal to Millamour. I'll take the liberty to join the company above. (*aside to Millamour*) She is the best of the family. [*Exit.*

Mrs. BROMLEY.

A valuable man Mr Malvil is! He has a great esteem for you, Sir. His sincerity is unequall'd. You seem thoughtful, Mr. Millamour.

MILLAMOUR.

Thoughtful, Ma'am!—There are certain subjects that—what Malvil says is true—A man may marry her, and sit down to his happiness at once. (*aside*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Sir John has been saying a great deal to me about you.

MILLAMOUR.

Has he, Ma'am?—There is a circumstance, which he is as yet a stranger to—a circumstance, which to communicate, will perhaps—It is what I have long wished, and—

Mrs. BROMLEY,

Faultering! hesitating! (*aside*) I interrupt you.

MILLAMOUR.

There is a circumstance, Ma'am—the affair is—
My

My father for a long time——Sir John, for a long time——Sir John has wished——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

To see you married?

MILLAMOUR.

To see me married, Ma'am—and—he has—he has wished it much.—And a settlement, by way of jointure—long ready for the Lady's name—that is—any lady, who shall honour me with her affection——and——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

No lady can be insensible of your pretensions.

MILLAMOUR.

You are very good, Ma'am; and after long observation, and a lasting passion grafted on it, which, tho' silent hitherto,---yet working secretly---when disclosed at length---may to the person in the world---who already formed by experience, may in every respect---and if without presuming too far——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

What a delicate confusion he is in. (*aside*)

MILLAMOUR.

And if this paper, Ma'am——

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*taking the paper*)

When given by you, Sir——

Enter

90 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

Enter BYGROVE.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Perverse and cruel ! (*walks aside*)

BYGROVE.

You both look grave ; nothing amiss, I hope.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Every thing is as it should be, Sir.

MILLAMOUR. (*aside*)

Not if he knew all.

BYGROVE.

Sir John has been complaining——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Pass that by ; advise your own son ; had not you better step up stairs ? Mr. Millamour will do what is right. (*smiling at him*) You may leave it all to him ; trust to his judgement.

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Millamour, I have such a story for you : Malvil and Dashwould have been quarelling about you, and——

BYGROVE.

Po ! and here they all come ; I knew the substance
could

could not be far off, when the shadow projected before it.

Enter Lady BELL, DASHWOULD, and MALVIL.

Lady BELL.

Mr. Dashwould, do you think I'll bear this? What liberty will you take next? You think, because I laugh, that I am not offended. — Aunt, I received a letter, and he has attempted to snatch it from me.

DASHWOULD.

Why it brings a little cargo of ridicule from the country, and my friend Malvil fees no joke in it.

MALVIL.

When my friend's name is brought in question, Sir——

Lady BELL.

It is diverting notwithstanding.——Aunt, what do you think? My cousin Cynthia, you know, was to be married to Sir George Squanderstock; her mother opposed it, and broke off the match, and now it's come out, that she was all the time the clandestine rival of her own daughter.

MILLAMOUR.

Not inapplicable to the present business. (*aside*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Go, you giddy girl, no such thing!

MIL-

MILLAMOUR. (*aside*)

She charms by her very faults.

Sir HARRY. (*goes up to BYGROVE.*)

And Dashwould has been saying——

BYGROVE.

Po! repeat none of his sayings to me.

Lady BELL.

Did you say any thing Mr. Dashwould? What was it?

DASHWOULD.

Oh! nothing. Sir George Squanderstock is my very good friend.

MALVIL.

And for that reason, you might spare him. No man is without his faults.

DASHWOULD.

Ay, allow him faults, out of tendernefs.

BYGROVE.

Sir George is a valuable man, Sir, and represents his county to great advantage.

DASHWOULD.

He does fo; takes a world of pains; nothing can escape him; Manilla ranfom not paid; there muft be a motion about that matter: he knots his handkerchief

kerchief to remember it.---Scarcity of corn! another knot---triennial parliaments---(*knots*) Juries judges of law as well as fact (*knots*) national debt (*knots*) bail in criminal cases (*knots*) and so on he goes, till his handkerchief is twisted into questions of state; the liberties and fortunes of all posterity dangling like a bede roll; he puts it in his pocket, drives to the gaming table, and the next morning his handkerchief goes to the wash, and his country and the minority are both left in the fuds.

Lady BELL.

What a description!

Sir HARRY.

Hey! lively Lady Bell!

} both laugh

MILLAMOUR.

Ho! ho! I thank you, Dashwould.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*aside to MILLAMOUR.*)

How can you encourage him? Let us leave 'em to themselves.

MALVIL.

You see, Mr. Bygrove—

BYGROVE.

Ay! thus he gets a story to graft his malice upon, and then he sets the table in a roar at the next tavern.

Sir HARRY.

Never be out of humour with Dashwould, Mr. Bygrove; he keeps me alive; he has been exhibiting pictures

pictures of this sort all the morning, as we rambled about the town.

DASHWOULD.

Oh! no; no pictures; I have shewn him real life.

Sir HARRY.

Very true, Dashwould: and now mind him; he will touch them off to the life for you.

Mrs. BROLMEY.

Millamour so close with Lady Bell! the forward importunity of that girl. (*aside, and goes to MILLAMOUR.*)

DASHWOULD.

There is positively no such thing as going about this town, without seeing enough to split your sides with laughing. We called upon my friend Sir Volatile Vainlove: he, you know, shines in all polite assemblies, and is, if you believe himself, of the first character for intrigue. We found him drinking Valerian tea for his breakfast, and putting on false calves.

Sir HARRY.

And the confusion he was in, when we entered the room!

DASHWOULD.

In the next street, we found Jack Spinbrain, a celebrated poet, with a kept mistress at his elbow, writing lampoons for the news-paper; one moment murdering the reputation of his neighbours, and the next

next a suicide of his own.—We saw a young heir, not yet of age, granting annuity bonds, and five Jews, and three Christians, duped by their avarice to lend money upon them. A lawyer——

Sir HARRY.

Hear, hear ; it is all true. I was with him.

DASHWOULD.

A lawyer taking notes upon Shakespeare : a deaf Nabob ravished with musick, and a blind one buying pictures. Men without talents, rising to preferment, and real genius going to a jail.—An officer in a marching regiment with a black-eye, and a French hair-dresser wounded in the sword arm.

Sir HARRY.

Oh ! ho ! ho ! by this light I can vouch for every word.

BYGROVE.

Go on, Sir Harry, ape your friend in all his follies ; be the nimble marmozet, to grin at his tricks, and try to play them over again yourself.

Sir HARRY.

Well now, that is too severe : Dashwould, defend me from his wit. You know I hoard up all your good things.

DASHWOULD.

You never pay me in my own coin, Sir Harry : try now ; who knows but you will say something ?

MAL-

MALVIL.

Friend or foe it is all alike.

Lady BELL. (*coming forward*)

And where is the mighty harm? I like pulling to pieces of all things.

MILLAMOUR. (*following Lady BELL.*)

To be sure it is the life of conversation. Does your Ladyship know Sir George Squanderstock's sister?

Lady BELL.

I have seen her.

MILLAMOUR.

She is a politician in petticoats; a fierce republican; she talks of the dagger of Brutus, while she settles a pin in her tucker; and says more about ship-money, than pin-money.

BYGROVE.

And now you must turn buffoon?

DASHWOULD.

I know the lady; she scolds at the loyalists, gossips against the act of settlement, and has the fidgets for magna charta.

MILLAMOUR.

She encourages a wrinkle against bribery; flirts her fan at the ministry, and bites her lips at taxes, and a standing army.

MAL-

MALVIL,

Mr. Bygrove, will you bear all this?

Enter Miss NEVILLE, and whispers Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY,

Very well, Neville, I'll come presently.

[*Exit Miss NEVILLE.*]

MALVIL. (*looking at Miss NEVILLE.*)

I shall stay no longer. Mr. Bygrove, will you walk?
[*Exit.*]

BYGROVE.

No, Sir, I shall not leave the enemy in this room behind me: a bad translator of an antient poet, is not so sure to deface his original, as his licentious strain to disparage every character.

DASHWOULD.

Sir Harry, he will neither give, nor take a joke.

Sir HARRY,

No, I told you so.

BYGROVE.

Let me tell you once for all, Sir——

DASHWOULD.

I wish you would.

BYGROVE.

Why interrupt? Do you know what I was going to say?

DASHWOULD.

No, do you?

MILLAMOUR.

I'll leave 'em all to themselves. *[Steals out.]*

Mrs. BROMLEY. *(aside)*

Millamour gone! *[Exit.]*

BYGROVE.

And what does all this mighty wit amount to? The wit in vogue, exposes one man; makes another expose himself; gets into the secrets of an intimate acquaintance, and publishes a story to the world; belies a friend; puts an anecdote, a letter, an epigram into the news-paper; and that is the whole amount of modern wit.

DASHWOULD.

A strain of morose invective is more diverting, to be sure.

BYGROVE. *(looking about for Mrs. BROMLEY.)*

Well, Sir, we'll adjourn the debate. You may go on; misrepresent every thing; if there is nothing ridiculous, invent a story: and when you have done it, it is but a cheap and frivolous talent. Has a lady a good natural bloom? Her paint must be an expensive

penfive article. Does ſhe look grave? She will ſin the deeper. Is ſhe gay and affable? Her true character will come out at the Commons. That is the whole of your art, and I leave you to the practice of it: (*going*)

DASHWOULD.

Satyrical Bygrove! now the widow has him in tow.

BYGROVE. (*turning back*)

Could not you ſtay till my back was fairly turned?
[*Exit.*]

DASHWOULD.

What a look there was!

Lady BELL.

At what a rate you run on! you keep the field againſt them all.

DASHWOULD.

Sir Harry, ſtep up, and watch him with the widow.

Sir HARRY.

I will; don't ſtay too long.

DASHWOULD.

I'll follow you: and hark, make your party good with Miſs Neville.

Sir HARRY.

You ſee, Lady Bell, a ſling at every body. [*Exit.*]

DASHWOULD.

The Baronet does not want parts; that is to say, he has very good materials to play the fool with. I shall get him to marry Miss Neville.

Lady BELL.

Bring that about, and you will for once do a serious action, for which every body will honour you.

DASHWOULD.

In the mean time, do you watch your aunt Bromley: she is your rival.

Lady BELL.

Rival? That would be charming.

DASHWOULD.

It is even so. Now Millamour's understanding is good, but his passion's quick: if you play your cards right——

Lady BELL.

Are you going to teach me how to manage a man?

DASHWOULD.

Coquetry will never succeed with him. A quick-sand does not shift so often as his temper. You must take him at his word, and never give him time to change, and veer about.

Lady BELL.

Totally out of nature.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

Oh! very well. I give up the point. [*Exit.*

Lady BELL.

You may leave the man to my management. My aunt Bromley rival me! that would be delightful.

Enter Lady JANE.

Lady BELL.

Well, sister!

Lady JANE.

Can you be serious for a moment?

Lady BELL.

Well, the solemnity of that look! Must I set my face by yours, and contract a wrinkle, by a formal æconomy of features, which you, like the rest of the world, mistake for wisdom?

Lady JANE.

Will you hear me? They are hurrying this match too fast, I think. Sir John is come, and his lawyer is expected every moment. He wants to conclude the affair this day, and my aunt does not oppose it. But I don't like all this hurry.

Lady BELL.

And why need you be concerned about it?

Lady JANE.

Do you think Millamour capable of love?

Lady BELL.

For the moment. It will be difficult to fix him.

Lady JANE.

What would you have me do?

Lady BELL.

Do?—Nothing.

Lady JANE.

How silly! you know it is not my seeking.

Lady BELL.

What are you about? Talking in your sleep again? Lady Jane, wake yourself. What have you taken into your head?

Lady JANE.

Why since Mr. Millamour has prevailed with me—

Lady BELL.

His affections then are fixed upon you?—Why the man has been dying at my feet, with a face as rueful as a love elegy.

Lady JANE.

You will permit me to laugh in my turn,

Lady BELL.

Oh! I can laugh with you, and at you, and at him too. This gives spirit to the business: here are difficulties,

difficulties, and difficulties enhance victory, and victory is triumph.

Lady JANE.

Very well ! oh ! brave ! laugh away ! you will be undeceived presently.—If this does not take, I am at the end of my line. [Exit.]

Lady BELL.

What does all this mean ? Rivall'd, outwitted by my sister ! Insupportable ! This begins to grow serious.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

'Sdeath ! she here ! Sir John is quite impatient, and I am going for his attorney.

Lady BELL.

And Lady Jane is impatient too : she is the object of your choice.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Jane ! you are pleasant, very pleasant.

Lady BELL.

She has told me with inflexible gravity !

MILLAMOUR.

She is a great wit ; and great wits have great quickness of invention ; and so a story is easily dressed up. I could crack my sides with laughing. If trifling civilities have been received as a declaration of love——

Lady BELL.

And is that the case? Very whimsical indeed.

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, very whimsical! I am eternally yours, ma'am, and I am on the wing, and your Ladyship's adorer. (*going*)

Enter Lady JANE.

Lady JANE. (*aside*)

Now to plague 'em both.—Sister, you may hear it from himself.

MILLAMOUR.

Confusion!

Lady BELL.

That lady, Sir, has the strangest notion.—

Lady JANE.

You will be so good as to explain all to my sister.

MILLAMOUR. (*aside*)

Both upon me at once.—I have explained, madam, and all further talk about it is unnecessary.

Lady BELL.

Only to satisfy her curiosity.

Lady JANE.

To shew my sister her mistake.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR. (*to Lady Jane*)

I have made every thing clear, ma'am.—(*to Lady Bell*) Have not I, Lady Bell? And a—(*turns to Lady Jane*) every thing now is upon a proper footing.

Lady JANE.

Very well; only give her to understand——

MILLAMOUR.

Your understanding is admirable. (*turns to Lady Bell*) I told you she would talk in this style. (*turns to Lady Jane*) You are perfectly right, and nobody understands things better. (*turns to Lady Bell*) Nobody whatever. (*looks and laughs at both by turns*)

Lady BELL.

But give me leave. You must speak out, Sir.

MILLAMOUR. (*aside to Lady Bell*)

Never argue about it, it is not worth your while.

Lady JANE.

There is some mystery in all this.

MILLAMOUR.

No; all very clear: (*to Lady Jane*) drop it for the present.

Lady BELL.

But I desire no doubt may remain.

Lady JANE.

And I don't like to be kept in suspense.

pulling him by the arm.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Distraction! I am like a lawyer, that has taken fees on both sides. You do me honour, ladies; but upon my soul, I can't help laughing. It will divert us some day or other, this will. Oh! ho! ho! I shall die with laughing. (*breaks from them*)

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY, and Sir JOHN.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

What is all this uproar for?

MILLAMOUR.

Another witness of my folly! (*runs to the other side*)

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

Millamour, I give you joy. Mr. Copyhold, your attorney, is come with the deeds. What's the matter?

MILLAMOUR.

The strangest adventure! I can't stay now. The ladies have been very pleasant. You love humour, and they have an infinite deal. I'll come to you in a moment. [*Exit.*]

Sir JOHN.

George, don't run away: let us finish the business.

DASHWOULD.

If he says he'll marry, you may depend upon him.

him. A poet, determined to write no more, or a gamester forswearing play, is not so sure to keep his word. I wish I may die, if I don't think him as much to be relied upon as a prime minister.

Lady BELL.

Aunt? Would you believe it? The demure Lady Jane—(*bursts into a laugh*) She has taken such a fancy into her head! Millamour she thinks is up to the eyes in love with her,

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Ha! ha! ha! poor Lady Jane!

Lady JANE.

And my sister's pride is hurt. She carries it with an air, as if she had made a complete conquest.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

How ridiculous the girls are! your son has open'd his mind to you, Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

He has, and I approve of his choice. I hope it is as agreeable to you, as to his father.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I don't know how to refuse my consent.

Enter BYGROVE, listening.

BYGROVE.

What does all this mean?

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

As I could wish. There he is. (*seeing BYGROVE*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Since it has your approbation, Sir John, I believe I must yield my consent. I never thought to marry again, but since you will have it so——

Sir JOHN.

Lady Bell I understand, is willing to do me the honour of being my daughter in law.

Lady BELL.

Oh! ho! ho! ho! this makes amends for all. My dear Aunt Bromley, are you imposed upon? Did you listen to the traitor's vows?——The dear, perfidious? (*laughs violently*)

DASHWOULD.

He will soon be settled, Sir John, since there are now three rival goddesses contending for him, Mr. Bygrove, you are come in good time.

BYGROVE.

What fool's part are you to play now? (*coming forwards*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Sir John, I desire I may not be made your sport. Have not I here, under his hand, a declaration of his mind; here, in this copy of verses, given to me by himself, an earnest of his affection?

Lady

Lady BELL.

Verfes ! Aunt ?

Lady JANE.

Verfes to you ?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Verfes to me : only hear, Sir John. (*reads*)

" I look'd, and I sigh'd, and I wish'd I could speak,"

" And fain would have paid adoration."

Lady BELL.

Stay, stay ; mine begin the same way. (*takes out a paper*)

Lady JANE.

The very words of mine. (*takes out a paper*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Will those girls have done ? (*reads*)

" But when I endeavour'd the matter to break,"

Lady BELL. (*reads*)

" Still then I said least of my passion."

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Will you be quiet ? (*reads*)

" Still then I said least of my passion ;"

" I swore to myself——"

Lady

Lady BELL. (*reads fast*)

"*And resolv'd I would try,*

Mrs. BROMLEY, and Lady BELL. (*reading together*)

"*Some way my poor heart to recover.*"

Lady JANE, Lady BELL, and Mrs. BROMLEY.
(*reading eagerly together.*)

"*But that was all vain, for I sooner could die,*

"*Than live with forbearing to love her.*"

Lady BELL.

Oh! ho! ho! ho! Mr. Dashwould, what a piece
of work has he made?

DASHWOULD.

And the verses copied from Congreve.

Lady BELL.

Copied from Congreve! (*laughs heartily*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

There, Sir John, there is your son's behaviour!

DASHWOULD.

There, Mr. Bygrove, there is the widow's beha-
viour.

BYGROVE.

And now, Mr. Dashwould, now for your wit.

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*to Sir JOHN.*)
I am not disappointed in the least, Sir.

Sir JOHN.
I never was so cover'd with confusion!

Lady BELL:
I never was so diverted in all my days.

DASHWOULD.
He has acted with great propriety upon this occasion.

Mrs. BROMLEY.
He has made himself very ridiculous. He has exposed nobody but himself. Contempt is the only passion he can excite. A crazy, mad, absurd——
(*tearing the paper*)

Lady JANE.
An inconstant, wild, irresolute——(*tears the paper*)

Lady BELL.
Ha! ha! ha! so whimsical a character. (*kisses the paper*)

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*throwing the fragments about*)
This behaviour will give him prodigious lustre. He will shine after this. I hope his visits will cease at this house.

(BYGROVE. *going up to Mrs. BROMLEY.*)
If ever you marry again, similitude of temper must
do it.

Mrs. BROMLEY.
Distraction! must you plague me too?

BYGROVE.
You have appear'd with an air, but it was all
struggling.

Mrs. BROMLEY.
I cannot bear this.

BYGROVE.
Heaven knows how you have struggled!

Mrs. BROMLEY.
And you too? (*mimicks him*) "A match in your
family has diverted me of late." I renounce you all.
Come, Lady Bell, Lady Jane, and let us leave them
to themselves. [Exit.

Lady JANE.
You would not believe me, sister. [Exit.

Lady BELL.
Oh! this to me is as good as a comedy. [Exit.

DASHWOULD, (*to BYGROVE.*)
What shall I give you for your chance?

By-

BYGROVE.

More than I'll give you for your wit. And there's
your answer. *[Exit.]*

DASHWOULD.

The old pike is hooked, and struggles still at the
end of her line.

Sir JOHN.

Mr. Dashwould, speak to this silly young man.
You have influence over him. Keep him to dinner.
You will for ever oblige me. I must go and pacify
the ladies. *[Exit.]*

DASHWOULD.

Poor Millamour! Dryden has painted him to a
hair.

Blest madman, who can ev'ry hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy.

End of the THIRD ACT.

A C T the F O U R T H.

Enter DASHWOULD, and Sir HARRY.

DASHWOULD.

THIS way, Sir Harry. While they are all engaged in the pleasures of the table, I want a word with you in private.

Sir HARRY.

With that face of importance! what is coming now?

DASHWOULD.

Listen to me: know a little of the subject, before you give your opinion.

Sir HARRY.

I am all attention.

DASHWOULD.

Did you mark Miss Neville, at dinner?

Sir HARRY.

You know I did. And when Mrs. Bromley railed at her——

DASHWOULD.

She railed at her with a littleness of spirit, that disgraced wealth and affluence, and gave to poverty
the

the superior character. You must have seen in the behaviour of that girl, though treated with pride and arrogance, a propriety that was elegant, and went even further; it interested every heart for her. She is the best of the group. Were I, at the head of such a fortune as yours, to choose a wife, she should be the object of my affection.

Sir HARRY.

You have some scheme in all this.

DASHWOULD.

I have; to serve you. I should mortify the pride of Mrs. Bromley, by placing a valuable, but helpless, young lady upon a level with her at once.

Sir HARRY. (*bursts into a laugh*)

This is to end in some joke.

DASHWOULD.

Wait for the wit before you laugh. I am in serious earnest. Her understanding is the best among them. The others are all artificial; she is a natural character; and if I am not mistaken, has a heart. If I wanted heirs to my estate, she should be the mother of my children.

Sir HARRY.

Were I to be the dupe of all this, how you would laugh at me? Ha! ha! ha! I know you too well.

DASHWOULD.

Again! laughing without the provocation of a
H 2 joke.

joke Don't be the dupe of your own cunning. I know you love her; and will it not be a generosity worthy of you, to extricate merit out of distress? Nay, the merit which you admire? The merit which would do honour to the choice of any man in England?

Sir HARRY.

Well, I cannot contain. (*laughs heartily*)

DASHWOULD.

What's the matter?

Sir HARRY.

The scrape in which you involved Millamour with the widow!

DASHWOULD.

Foolish! that was Malvil's doing. You'll hear more of it by and by. There is an underplot in all his actions. I advise you for the best. Here is a lady in question, untainted by the fashions of the age. Make her your own. She has no fortune; what then? Shew yourself superior to the sordid views, that govern the little mercenary spirits of the world.

Sir HARRY. (*laughs*)

I have just recollected what you said of Jack Invoice, upon his marriage.

DASHWOULD.

Jack Invoice? He never was intended for any thing but to be laughed at. Upon the death of a rich uncle in the city, he comes to the West-end of the town,

town, with a plumb in his pocket, and not an idea in his head; marries a fantastical woman of rank, and with a sovereign contempt of all his former acquaintance, mixes with Lords and people of quality, who win his money, and throw his wig in the fire to divert themselves. He laughs at their wit, and thinks himself in good company.

Sir HARRY.

Admirable! you have him to a hair. (*laughing heartily*)

DASHWOULD. (*laughing*)

Hey! the picture is like.—(*laughs*) Pretty well, is not it?

Sir HARRY.

Oh! ho! ho! the very thing! poor Jack Invoice! you have hunted him down.

DASHWOULD.

Have I? (*laughs*) Yes, I think I have been pleasant upon him. But come; to our point: in marrying Miss Neville, there is nothing ridiculous. You like her, that's clear.

Sir HARRY.

But she does not like me, and that's as clear. Some body has done me a prejudice there. She received this letter, and gave it me to read.

DASHWOULD. (*reads*)

“ To Miss Neville—(*opens it*) Without a name?

118 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

Sir HARRY.

A poison'd arrow in the dark.

DASHWOULD, (*reads*)

“ Anonymous letters are generally the effect of
“ clandestine malice ; this comes from a friend. If
“ your honour, your virtue, and your peace of mind,
“ are worth your care, avoid the acquaintance of
“ Sir Harry. He is the deceiver of innocence, and
“ means to add your name to the list of those whom
“ his treachery has already ruined. Make use of
“ this hint, and act accordingly.”

A pretty epistle—(*pauses*) Don't I know this hand?
—So, so ! I understand it : I can trace this : say no
more, Sir Harry : pursue Miss Neville the closer for
this. Will you let such a fellow as Malvil, rob you
of a treasure ?

Sir HARRY.

You don't suspect him ?

DASHWOULD.

Leave it all to me. Assure Miss Neville that this
shall be cleared up. Hush ! we are interrupted : go
and join the company.

Enter MALVIL.

Sir HARRY.

Pshaw ! pox ! the company without you——

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

Very well; leave me now: (*Exit Sir HARRY.*)
What's the matter Malvil?

MALVIL.

It will be over presently: a sudden sensation; I can't bear to see others made unhappy. Mrs. Bromley is a very valuable woman, but at times rather violent.

DASHWOULD.

And that's much to be lamented, is not it?

MALVIL.

You may laugh at it, Sir, but I think it a serious matter. I left poor Miss Neville in a flood of tears; and——here she comes.

Enter Miss NEVILLE.

DASHWOULD.

Not rising from table so soon?

Miss NEVILLE.

Excuse me, Sir, I had rather not stay.

DASHWOULD.

Never mind Mrs. Bromley's humours; come, we will all take your part.

Miss NEVILLE.

I am not fit for company, Sir.

H 4

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

I am sorry to lose you: I'll leave you with my worthy friend; he will administer consolation.

[Exit,

Miss NEVILLE.

Was there ever such inhuman tyranny? Insulted before the whole company!

MALVIL.

It hurts me to the quick. I could not have believed her capable of such violence.

Miss NEVILLE.

You saw that I gave her no provocation.

MALVIL.

It pains me to see what I do.

Miss NEVILLE.

She breaks out in such passionate onsets, and never considers that an overbearing pride is the worst of cruelty to an ingenuous mind.

MALVIL.

There are few who know how to confer an obligation. A disinterested action gives such moments of inward pleasure! Oh! there are moments of the heart, worth all the giddy pleasures of life. One benevolent action pays so amply, and yields such exquisite interest, that I wonder people are not fond of laying out their money in that way.

Miss

Miss NEVILLE.

During the whole time of dinner, it was one continued invective against me.

MALVIL.

Millamour's behaviour had disconcerted her. But that is no excuse. Goodness by fits, and generosity out of mere whim, can never constitute a valuable character. I am sorry to see you so afflicted.

Miss NEVILLE.

You are very good, Sir.

MALVIL.

No, I have no merit in it; the instincts of my nature leave me no choice. I have studied myself, and I find I am only good by instinct. I am strangely interested for you. I have thought much of your situation: our time is short; they will be all rising from table, presently. Attend to what I say: since Mrs. Bromley is so incessant in her tyranny, do as I already hinted to you. Withdraw from this house at once. Madam La Rouge has an apartment ready for you. You may there remain concealed. In the mean time I shall be at work for you. I shall prevail upon Mrs. Bromley to keep her word, about the five thousand pounds. That added to what is in my power, will make a handsome settlement for you.

Miss NEVILLE.

You heard what she said to Sir Harry.

MAL-

MALVIL.

She wants to drive you to some act of despair; perhaps to give you up a sacrifice to Sir Harry's loose desires.

Miss NEVILLE.

Are you so clear about Sir Harry?

MALVIL. (*aside*)

'Sdeath! I see she loves him.—Hereafter, I will open a scene to astonish you. (*pauses, and looks at her*) You can never be happy under this roof. Mrs. Bromley will make this quarrel up, I know she will. The whole of her virtue consists in repentance, but what kind of repentance? A specious promise to reform her conduct, and a certain return of the same vices.

Miss NEVILLE.

She has made me desperate. I can stay here no longer. I'll go back to the country. I shall there be at peace.

MALVIL.

You will be there too much out of the way. When you are settled at Madam La Rouge's, the haughty Mrs. Bromley will see to what she has driven you, and for the sake of her character, will begin to relent. Sir Harry must not know where you are. He means your ruin, I am sorry to say it, but I can give you such convincing proof——

Enter

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Do you go to your room, madam ; let me see you no more to-day.

MALVIL.

It was a mere unguarded word that fell from Miss Neville. (*speaks to Mrs. Bromley aside*) Milla-mour is ashamed of his conduct. He is under my influence still : I shall mould him to your wishes.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*aside to him*)

I am a fool to think any more about him. Go to him ; watch him all day ; you will not find me ungrateful. (*loud*) And pray tell those girls to come up stairs. (*Exit Malvil*) Mighty well, madam. (*to Miss Neville*) You must sit next to Sir Harry : you have pretensions, have you ? And you must vouch for Lady Bell too ? She does not love gaming ; that story is all calumny : bespeak yourself a place in the stage coach ; you shall quit this house, I promise you.

Miss NEVILLE.

It will be the last time I shall receive those orders, madam. Your favours are so embittered ; there is such a leaven of pride, even in your acts of bounty, that I cannot wish to be under any further obligations. If doing justice to Lady Bell, if avowing my sentiments in the cause of so amiable a friend, can give you umbrage, I am not fit to remain in this house.

[*Exit.*

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

O brave! you shall travel. Give her a fortune!
No, let Lady Bell reward her. How!—Milla-
mour, as I live.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

Deliver me, fate! she here:—Madam—I—I—
I—you are not going to leave us, I hope.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*smiling at Millamour*)
And how can you look me in the face?

MILLAMOUR. (*seeing Sir JOHN*)
I am glad you are come, Sir, I wanted to—

Mrs. BROMLEY:
Perverse! what brings Sir John! (*aside*)—I
shall expect you above stairs, gentlemen. I must
try once more to fix that irresolute, inconstant man.
[*Exit.*

Sir JOHN.
What a day's work have you made here?

MILLAMOUR.

Sir!

Sir JOHN.
Can you expect any good from all this? For
ever

ever doing and undoing ! These proceedings are terrible to your father.

MILLAMOUR.

You know, Sir, that to gratify you is the height of my ambition.

Sir JOHN.

For shame ! don't imagine that you can deceive me any longer. Are you to be for ever in suspense ? Always resolving, and yet never decided ? Never knowing your own mind for five minutes ?

MILLAMOUR.

I have not been hasty to determine.

Sir JOHN.

My indulgence has made me too ridiculous. You will force me to tell you my mind in harsher terms than I ever thought I should have occasion to do.

MILLAMOUR.

What has happened to day, was but a mere frolic, and it has all passed off in a little raillery.

Sir JOHN.

And do you think that sufficient ? While you remain insensible of your folly ; transferring your inclinations from one object to another ; hurried away by every casualty, you will prove the jest of all your acquaintance. You will cease to live, before you have begun.

MILLAMOUR.

This is rather too much, Sir. If I have, in a few
in-

instances, departed from a resolution that seemed fixed, you know very well, it is not uncommon; and when a person means an extraordinary leap, he retires back, to take advantage of the ground, and spring forward with greater vigour.

Sir JOHN.

And thus you amuse yourself, compounding upon easy terms, for the folly of every hour. There is no relying upon you.

MILLAMOUR.

After all, Sir, it is the prudent part to consider every thing. The ladies were rather hasty in their conclusion. In our moments of reflection, as objects pass before us, opinion will wear different colours.

Sir JOHN.

The very Cameleon has that merit: but is there to be nothing inward? No self-governing principle? A ship without a pilot, without rudder, or compass, is as likely to avoid rocks, and quicksands, as you to steer clear of ruin.

MILLAMOUR.

You seem exasperated, but I really don't see the cause.

Sir JOHN.

No?—Can't you feel how absurd it is to be always beginning the world? For ever in a doubt? Day after day embarking in new projects, nay twenty different projects in one day, and often in an hour?

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Spare my confusion: I feel my folly; I feel it all; and let my future conduct——

Sir JOHN.

George, can I take your word? I know you have been at the gaming-table.

MILLAMOUR.

The gaming-table!

Sir JOHN.

Say no more: I know it all: after the indulgence I have shewn you, I now see that my hopes are all to be disappointed. If you have a mind to atone for what is past, pursue one certain plan, and be somebody. The time now opens a new scene, and calls for other manners. Reform your conduct, and I shall be happy. But I am tired of this eternal levity: my patience is wore out. I shall stay no longer in this house to be a witness of your absurdity.

[Exit.

MILLAMOUR.

I have made myself very ridiculous here. I can't shew my face any more in this family. I'll go back to the Temple, and not marry these ten years. The law leads to great things: a seat in Parliament, a vote or two against your conscience, a silk gown, and a judge; that's the course of things. I'll pursue my ambition.—Honest friend, (*calls to a servant*) hilt! honest friend, will you be so good as just to get my hat?

Enter

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

No, I bar hats. What going to desert us? The sport is but just beginning. Bygrove has been lecturing his son, and quarrelling with Malvil. The integrity of that honest gentleman is suspected at last. He was the worthiest man in the world this morning, as good a creature as ever was born, but now he has sold himself to the widow. Lady Bell has been lively upon the occasion; and Malvil, to support his spirits, has plyed the Burgundy, till he looks the very picture of hypocrisy, with a ruddy complexion, and a sparkling eye.

MILLAMOUR.

You may divert yourself, Sir; I have done with them all.

DASHWOULD.

But I can't part with you: you shall join us; Malvil shall have no quarter: he will stick to his glass till his charity for his neighbour begins to stagger; then off drops the mask: he will have courage enough to rail at mankind, and his true character will come forth, like letters in lemon juice before the fire.

MILLAMOUR.

Po! absurd! I am on the rack. Why did you force me to stay dinner? I have been so weak, so frivolous.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

How so? Because you chang'd your mind? There is nothing more natural. Don't you see men doing the same thing every day? Down goes the old mansion; a new one rises; exotic trees smile on the landscape, and enjoy the norther air; and when the whole is finished, in less than a twelve-month, the auctioneer mounts his pulpit. "Pleasing contiguity"—"Beautiful, and picturesque scene"—"Delectably featured by Nature"—"Shall I say twenty thousand?"—Down it goes to the highest bidder, who pays his money, and runs away the next morning with an opera singer to Italy.

MILLAMOUR. (*laughing*)

Why, yes, we see these things every day.

DASHWOULD.

No doubt; men are fickle, and inconstant.

MILLAMOUR.

Very true; it is the way through life; in the lowest rank, as well as the highest. You shan't see a journeyman Weaver, but he has his disgust, like a Lord, and changes his lodging, his house of call, his barber, and his field preacher.

DASHWOULD.

Certainly; and then there is a real charm in variety. Besides what you did to day, was a mere frolic.

MILLAMOUR.

Nothing more : and that fellow, Malvil, was the occasion of it. My heart never rightly warmed to that man. I shall never consult him again. Affairs were in a right train, if he had not interposed.

DASHWOULD.

You shall have your revenge. I have a mine to spring will blow him up.—(*laughs*) His advice to-day has served to produce the widow's character.

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, it has given a display of her. (*laughs*) How could she think me in earnest? Marry her ! I would go into the army sooner.

DASHWOULD.

A good pretty trade, the army : if you are killed in battle, it is your affair ; if you conquer, you may retire, and live very prettily upon half pay.

MILLAMOUR.

Very true : the law is a more certain road.

DASHWOULD.

A good agreeable life the law is : for ever entangled in the cobwebs of Westminster-hall ; and you help to spin them yourself into the bargain.

MILLAMOUR.

And at the end of twenty years, you are thought a good promising young man.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

In the mean time you are constantly hiring out your lungs, and ever in a passion about other people's affairs.

MILLAMOUR.

And travelling circuits, in hopes of finding each county distracted; with a barbarous, bloody murder, in every jail, and so live upon the calamities of mankind.

DASHWOULD.

Like physicians, when a north-east wind, a Lord Mayor's feast, or a jail distemper, has made a good sickly time of it. *(both laugh)*

Enter Lady BELL, and Lady JANE.

Lady BELL.

Come, sister, leave the men to themselves. Mr. Dashwould, has their wit frightened you away?

MILLAMOUR. *(looking at her)*

"Look in her face, and you forget them all."

DASHWOULD.

Won't your Ladyship have compassion on that gentleman?

Lady BELL.

Compassion!—my sister and I, we hope for his protection?

Enter Capt. BYGROVE.

Capt. BYGROVE.

When you go away from company, Lady Bell, you draw every body in your train.

Lady BELL.

Oh! you have so overpowered me with civil, and tender things!

MILLAMOUR. (*aside*)

What does he follow her for?

Lady BELL.

A l'honneur, gentlemen. (*goes up to Millamour*)
Uncle! Uncle Millamour, when you are married to my aunt, I hope you will be kind to us both.

(*curtsies*)

MILLAMOUR. (*turning away*)

Confusion! daggers! daggers!

Lady JANE. (*curtsying*)

May I salute you, uncle?

MILLAMOUR.

Po! this foolery! (*walks away*)

Lady BELL.

Let us give him all his titles!—Brother—when you marry my Sister.—(*makes a low curtsy*)

MIL—

MILLAMOUR.

How can you, Lady Bell?

Lady JANE.

Uncle!—Brother!

Lady BELL.

And Brother Uncle!

(both laugh)

MILLAMOUR. (*breaking away from them*)

This is too much—No patience can endure it.
(*turns to Lady Bell*) Madam, this usage—

(*Lady BELL and Lady JANE both laugh loud.*)

Lady JANE.

Come, sister, let us leave him.

[*Exit.*]

Lady BELL.

Oh! ho! ho! I shall expire. (*going*)

MILLAMOUR.

Why will you torment me thus? (*takes her by the hand*) Am I to be for ever made your sport?

Lady BELL.

Oh! you would not have me laugh. To be sure, when one considers, it is a serious matter. And though Captain Bygrove (*pointing to him*) has orders to be in love with me; and though he has declared himself in the warmest terms—

MILLAMOUR.

And could you listen to him?

Lady BELL.

And yet, after all your promises, when you had touched my heart—(*in a softened tone*)

MILLAMOUR.

Jealous of me by this light. (*aside*)

Lady BELL.

After all your faithless vows, to break them as you have done, like a Turk, or a Jew, or a Mahometan, (*crying*) and leave me, like Dido and Æneas, it is enough to break a young girl's heart. (*crying bitterly*) so it is, it is—There, will that please you? (*bursts into a laugh*) Adieu, uncle! my compliments to my aunt— [Exit,

MILLAMOUR.

Damnation!

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Did not I hear somebody crying?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, and laughing too. Captain Bygrove, you said something to Lady Bell, what was it, Sir?

Capt. BYGROVE.

What I desire the world to know; I love her, I
adore

adore her. My father has orderd it, Mrs. Bromley approves; Lady Bell encourages me; and I shall be the happiest of mankind.

MILLAMOUR.

You and I must talk apart, Sir. You know my prior claim. Attempt my life rather than my love. You must think no more of her, Sir; she is mine by every tie, and so I shall tell her, this moment. [*Exit.*

DASAWOULD.

Now hold that resolution, if you can.

Capt. BYGROVE.

I have managed it well.

DASHWOULD

Admirably!

SIR HARRY.

What does all this mean? Dashwould, you are wanted in the next room. Malvil is in for it: he sits toasting Miss Neville, while every idea fades away from his countenance, all going out one by one, and his eye sinks into the dim vacuity of a brisk no meaning at all.

DASHWOULD.

I'll look in upon 'em.—Bygrove, I see Miss Neville: let us give Sir Harry his opportunity.

Enter Miss NEVILLE.

Miss NEVILLE.

I thought Lady Bell was here : I beg your pardon, gentlemen.

DASHWOULD.

Your company is always agreeable, is not it, Sir Harry? The gentleman will speak for himself. Come, Bygrove, I have occasion for you.

[Exit with Captain Bygrove.]

Sir HARRY.

May I now presume, madam——

Miss NEVILLE.

You chuse your time but ill, Sir Harry. I have so many things to distract me, I cannot listen to you now.

Sir HARRY. *(takes her hand)*

But you promised to hear me ; I have long beheld your sufferings.

Miss NEVILLE.

They do not warrant improper liberties. I can be humble as becomes my situation. I hope you will not oblige me to shew that spirit, which virtue is as much intitled to, as the proudest fortune in the kingdom.

Sir HARRY.

I mean you no disrespect. That letter is a black
artifice

artifice to traduce my character: the fraud shall be brought to light; you may rely upon it; nor will you be so ungenerous as to believe the dark assassin of my honour.

Miss NEVILLE.

I know not what foundation there is for it, nor is it for me to charge you with any thing. I have no right to take that liberty.

Sir HARRY.

Why harbour suspicions unworthy of you? In me, you behold a warm admirer, who aspires at the possession of what he loves, and trembles for the event.

Miss NEVILLE.

I must take the liberty to doubt your sincerity. I know my own deficiencies, and I beg leave to withdraw.

Sir HARRY.

By all that's amiable in your mind and person, my views are honourable as ever yet inspired a lover's heart.

Miss NEVILLE.

I would fain express my gratitude. (*weeps*)

Sir HARRY.

Why those tears?

Miss NEVILLE.

Your character, I dare say, Sir, will come out clear

138 KNOW YOUR OWN MIND,

clear and unfullied. You will permit me to take care of mine. It is all I have to value. I shall not continue any longer in this house. Mrs. Bromley has made it impossible; I wish you all happiness, Sir.

Sir HARRY.

That resolution I approve of: let me provide you a retreat, and in a few days—

Miss NEVILLE.

I must beg to be excused: that I can never think of.

Sir HARRY.

By Heaven, I mean to raise you to that independence, which your merit deserves. I would place you in that splendor, which Mrs. Bromley may envy.

Miss NEVILLE.

I can only return my thanks. Lady Bell will know where I am. I feel no ambition: I do not want to give pain to Mrs. Bromley: I seek humble content, and ask no more.

Sir HARRY.

You do injustice to yourself and to me:—Hey! all breaking up from table!

Miss NEVILLE.

You must not detain me now, Sir Harry. I humbly take my leave. [Exit.

Sir HARRY.

I wonder what Dashwould will say to all this. I shall

shall like to hear him: he will turn it to a joke, I warrant him. No end of his pleasantry.

Enter MALVIL in liquor, BYGROVE, and DASHWOULD.

MALVIL.

Very well; make the most of it. Since you force me to speak, I say her character is a vile one.

BYGROVE.

Here is a fellow whom wine only inspires with malice.

DASHWOULD.

Po! malice! Malvil has no harm in him.

MALVIL.

You may talk of Mrs. Bromley, but she is as vile a character, as pride, and insolence, and avarice, and vanity, and fashionable airs, and decayed beauty can jumble together.

BYGROVE.

Here's a return for her hospitality!

MALVIL.

Marry her, I say; marry her, and try.

BYGROVE.

You shall not have a shilling with Miss Neville.

MALVIL.

There, the secret's out: you want to marry her, and make her break her word. Mankind's a villain!
a medley

a medley of false friends, eloping wives, stock jobbers, and usurers. Wits that won't write, and fools that will. (*sings*)

BYGROVE.

Dashwould, you are a panegyrist, compared to this man.

Sir HARRY.

Yes, he takes your trade out of your hands.

MALVIL.

She is Mrs. Bromley, the widow, and you are Mr. Bygrove, the widower; and so, bite the biter, that's all.

BYGROVE.

His wit soars above you, Mr. Dashwould.

MALVIL.

Wit is a bad trade. Letters have no friend left in these degenerate times. Shew a man of letters to the first of your nobility, and they will leave him to starve in a garret. Introduce a fellow, who can find a catch, write a dull political pamphlet, or remarks upon a Dutch memorial, or play off fireworks, and he shall pass six months in the country, by invitation. Mæcenas died two thousand years ago, and you are not historian enough to know it.

Sir HARRY.

Dashwould, he makes a bankrupt of you.

By-

BYGROVE.

I have found him out : I know him now : a pretended friend, that he may more surely betray you. Go, and get some coffee, to settle your head.

[*Exit.*]

MALVIL.

Mrs. Bromley will settle your head.

DASHWOULD.

Let us take him up stairs ; he'll tumble over the tea-table, to shew his politeness.

Sir HARRY. (*taking him by the arm*)

Come, the ladies wait for us.

MALVIL.

Mankind, I say, is a villain ! (*sings*)

Enter Lady BELL.

Lady BELL.

Bless me, Mr. Malvil !

MALVIL.

All Dashwould's doing to expose a body. Do you look to Millamour, that's what I say to you.

DASHWOULD.

He shan't stay to plague your Ladyship.—Come, Malvil, let us go and be tender of reputation above stairs.

MAL-

MALVIL.

I'm always tender, and you are scurrilous.

(Sings, and Exit, led by Dashwoud and Sir Harry)

Lady BELL.

How Millamour follows me up and down!
Charming! here he comes.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Bell, allow me but one serious moment.

Lady BELL.

This bracelet is always coming off.

(fiddles with it)

MILLAMOUR.

Whatever appearances may have been, I burn
with as true a passion, as ever penetrated a faithful
heart.

Lady BELL. *(aside, and smiling)*

I know he is mine.—This silly, obstinate bauble!
What were you saying? Oh! making love again.

MILLAMOUR.

By this dear hand I swear——

Lady BELL.

Hold, hold, no violence. Give me my liberty,
and thus I make use of it. *(runs away from him)*

Enter

Enter Capt. BYGROVE.

Lady BELL. (*meeting him*)

Oh! I have been wishing for you. How could you stay so long?

Capt. BYGROVE.

They detained me against my will. But you see, I am true to my appointment.

MILLAMOUR. (*aside to Bygrove*)

Are you so? You shall keep an appointment with me.

Lady BELL.

I was furrounded with darts, and flames. That gentleman was for renewing the old story, but it is so ridiculous!

(*walks up the stage with Captain Bygrove*)

MILLAMOUR.

Distraction! to be insulted thus!

Lady BELL. (*as she walks up*)

You have prevailed upon me to be in earnest at last. Since your father has proposed it, and since you have declared yourself, why, if I must speak, get my aunt's consent, and mine follows of course.

MILLAMOUR. (*listening*)

If ever I forgive this.

Capt.

Capt. BYGROVE:

Mrs. Bromley has consented. (*then aside to Lady Bell*) He has it; this will gall his pride.

MILLAMOUR.

No end of her folly. I was bent on marriage; but now it's all her own fault. And yet she knows my heart is fixed upon her.

Lady BELL.

(*walking down with Capt. Bygrove*)

You are so obliging, and I have so many things to say to you; but if people will not perceive, when they interrupt private conversation.

MILLAMOUR.

If ever I enter these doors again, may the scorn of the whole sex pursue me. [*Exit.*]

Capt. BYGROVE:

We have carried this too far.

Lady BELL.

The barbarous man, when he should have taken no denial, but have lain on the ground, imploring, beseeching—Delightful! here he comes again.

(*goes to Capt. Bygrove*)

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR. (*walking up to Lady Bell*)

Is it not strange, that you can't know your own mind for two minutes together?

Lady

Lady BELL.

Ho! ho! the assurance of that reproach!

(walks away)

MILLAMOUR. *(to Bygrove)*

Appoint your time and place: I must have satisfaction for this.

Capt. BYGROVE.

To-morrow morning, when the marriage ceremony is over.

MILLAMOUR.

I shall expect you, Sir. *(going)*

Enter Lady JANE.

MILLAMOUR.

This is lucky. I was in quest of your Ladyship.

Lady JANE.

In quest of me, Sir?

MILLAMOUR.

In quest of you, Ma'am. I have been waiting for an opportunity, and, if the sincerest sorrow can expiate past offences—Here's a chair, Ma'am.

(hands a chair)

Capt. BYGROVE. *(to Lady Bell)*

We may drive him to extremities with Lady Jane: I'll leave you to recover your wanderer. *[Exit.]*

MILLAMOUR. (*sitting down*)

If you will permit me to assure you—

Lady JANE.

But while my sister is my rival——

MILLAMOUR.

Your sister's charms carry their own antidote with them. If there is faith in man, I mean to atone for what is past.

Lady BELL. (*coming forward*)

So, so; with what pleasure she hears him? Did you speak to me, Mr. Millamour?

MILLAMOUR.

There was a time, Ma'am!—(*turns to Lady Jane*)
Now she wants to interrupt us: don't let us mind her, and she'll withdraw.

Lady BELL:

Wear the willow, Lady Bell?—Not a word, Sir? You are in the right: my spirits are too violent for you; and though what I say is not absolutely wit—Do you like wit? I am sure you ought; for it is undefineable, like yourself.

MILLAMOUR. (*smiling*)

That is not ill said.

Lady BELL. (*sits at a distance*)

Horrid! I shall be vapour'd up to my eyes. I'll try

try my song, to banish melancholy. Where is that foolish guittar? (*goes for it*)

MILLAMOUR.

Now her jealousy is at work. I knew she would be mortified. Let us agree to pique her pride, and probe her to the quick.

Lady BELL.

Though I can't sing, it diverts a body to try.
(*sits down, and sings*)

*Sabrina, with that sober mien,
The converse sweet, the look serene;
Those eyes that beam the gentlest ray,
And though she loves, that sweet delay;
Unconscious, seems each heart to take,
And conquers for her subject's sake!*

MILLAMOUR.

Vafty well! (*listens, smiles, looks at her, draws his chair near her, and beats time on her knee*)

Lady BELL. (*sings*)

*The tyrant Cynthia wings the dart,
Coquetting with a bleeding heart;
Has cruelty, which all adore,
Flights that torment, yet please the more:
Her lover strives to break his chain,
But can't, such pleasure's in the pain.*

MILLAMOUR.

Oh! charming! charming! (*kisses her hand*)

Lady BELL.

What are you about, you wretch? Only look, sister: I suppose, Sir, when you have done, you will give me my hand again.

Lady JANE.

I promise you, sister, your triumph will be short.
[Exit,

Lady BELL.

How she flung out of the room! (*rises, and walks about*)

MILLAMOUR.

You know, Lady Bell, that I am your's by conquest. I adore you still, and burn with a lover's faithful fires.

Lady BELL.

Come, and have a dish of tea to cool you.

MILLAMOUR.

Hear me but a moment. It is now time you should be tired of this eternal display of your power. Your power is sufficiently acknowledged and felt by all. You may triumph over adoring crouds, but one lover treated with generosity, will be more to your honour and your happiness.

Lady BELL.

Pretty, very pretty! I have read all that in one of the poets. (*repeats*)

By

*By our distress, you nothing gain,
Unless you love, you please in vain.*

Come up stairs, and I'll shew you the whole poem.

*And one adorer kindly us'd,
Gives more delight than crowds refus'd.*

Will you come? (*beckons him*) Won't you? Well,
consider of it, and when you know your own mind,
you may change it again. [*Exit.*]

MILLAMOUR.

There now! Every thing by turns, and nothing
long. Fickle do they call me? A man must be
fickle, who pursues her through all the whimsies of
her temper. Admire her in one shape, and she takes
another in a moment.

*One charm display'd, another strikes our view,
In quick variety for ever new.*

End of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT the FIFTH.

Enter MILLAMOUR, and DASHWOULD.

MILLAMOUR.

AM I to be sacrificed to your humour?

DASHWOULD.

Am I to be sacrificed to your absurdity?

MILLAMOUR.

When pleasantry is out of all time and place——

DASHWOULD.

Why then I shall be tired of all time and place.

MILLAMOUR.

Look ye, Mr. Dashwould, it is time to be serious. The wit, that wounds the breast of a friend, is the pest of society.

DASHWOULD.

The passion, Mr. Millamour, that runs headlong without cause, and will not hearken to reason, is a greater pest of society, than all the little wit that has been in the world. What does all this mean, Sir? what is it about?

Mil-

MILLAMOUR.

If I lost money at play, was it for you to carry the tale to my father? for you to subject me to his reproaches?

DASHWOULD.

I don't know by what fatality it happens, but that generally comes last, which ought to be mentioned first. I repeated nothing to Sir John—Who did? Do you ask that question? Malvil, Sir, with his usual duplicity.

MILLAMOUR.

Malvil? He has this moment told me how pleasant you were upon the subject, and at my expence.

DASHWOULD.

Yes; when he had revealed the whole, and with false tenderness lamented your folly.

MILLAMOUR.

'Sdeath! I understand it now. I have been absurd here.

DASHWOULD.

I don't dislike you for your absurdity: that serves to divert one: Malvil excites other feelings. You know the character he gave you of Lady Bell?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, and all slander.

DASHWOULD.

I left him but now, representing you to Lady Bell in the same colours——And here——(*shews a letter*) Here I have him fast. An anonymous letter against Sir Harry, sent for his own purposes, to Miss Neville. All his contrivance, dictated by himself, and written at an attorney's desk: You know old Copyhold?

MILLAMOUR.

Did he pen the letter?

DASHWOULD.

One of his clerks was the scribe. The young man is now in the house, at my request, and ready to prove Malvil the author. Here he comes—things are not ripe as yet. Say nothing now.

Enter MALVIL.

MILLAMOUR.

Walk in; you come opportunely.

MALVIL.

If I can be of any service——

MILLAMOUR.

To be of disservice, is your province; and when you have done the mischief, you can transfer the blame to others.

MAL-

MALVIL.

I have been rather off my guard to day. I am not used to be overtaken in that manner; my head is not quite clear.

MILLAMOUR.

Then this business may sober you. What was your whisper to me about that gentleman?

MALVIL.

That he treated with wanton pleasantry what I thought a serious matter. I may mistake the means, but the end of my actions I can always answer for. Sir John might hear of the affair from another quarter, and so to soften his resentment——

MILLAMOUR.

You took care to excite it.

MALVIL.

I—I—I am apt to carry my heart at my tongue's end.

DASHWOULD.

I knew his heart was not in the right place.

MALVIL.

I did not address myself to you, Sir.

MILLAMOUR.

I know you have the grimace of character, Mr. Malvil, arm'd at all points with plausible maxims.
But

But which of your maxims can justify the treachery of betraying the secret of a friend? Who does it, is a destroyer of all confidence; and when he attempts to varnish his conduct, with the specious name of friendship, the malignity strikes the deeper: artful, smiling malignity.

MALVIL.

I deserve all this. Friendship in excess is a fault. There are bounds and limits even to virtue. It would be well if a man could always hit the exact point. There is however something voluptuous in meaning well.

DASHWOULD.

Well express'd, Malvil! ha! ha! you are right.

MILLAMOUR.

No more of your musty sentences.

MALVIL:

Morals are not capable of mathematical demonstration. And——now I recollect myself——It did not occur at first——It was Madam La Rouge told the affair to Sir John——This gentleman here——I suppose you will take his word——he says she hears every thing, tells every thing, and he calls her a walking newspaper: not that she means any harm——I only mean to say——

DASHWOULD.

Oh! fie, don't be too severe upon her.

MAL-

MALVIL.

She said at the same time——you know her manner——she told Sir John that you are in love with half a dozen, and will deceive them all, and Lady Bell into the bargain.

MILLAMOUR.

Distraction! she dare not say it. This is another of your subterfuges——You know, Sir, how you traduced Lady Bell, and made that gentleman the author of your own malevolence. At any other time and place, this sword should read you a lecture of morality.

MALVIL.

You are too warm: and since I see it is so, to avoid contention, I shall adjourn the debate. [*Exit.*]

MILLAMOUR.

Deceive Lady Bell!—Whoever has dared to say it,—Madam La Rouge lives but a little way off. I'll bring her this moment, to confront this arch impostor. (*going*)

DASHWOULD.

You'll be sure to return.

MILLAMOUR.

This very night shall unmask him. [*Exit.*]

DASHWOULD.

I shall depend upon you. Malvil shall answer to Sir Harry: all his artifices shall be fairly laid open.

Enter

Enter BYGROVE.

BYGROVE.

Mr. Dashwould, we are now good friends. I have reposed a confidence in you. You know every thing between me and Mrs. Bromley, but you see how she goes on.

DASHWOULD.

And I see how you go on. You are the dupe of your own policy.

BYGROVE.

How so?

DASHWOULD.

The Widow's schemes are seconded by your own imprudence. Can't you see, that if Millamour were once married out of your way, Mrs. Bromley would then be at her last stake, and you might have some chance? And yet your son has it in command to defeat my friend Millamour with Lady Bell.

BYGROVE.

How! light breaks in upon me. Gull that I was! my son shall marry Lady Jane directly.

DASHWOULD.

To be sure; and the consequence is, that Lady Bell declares for Millamour.

BYGROVE.

Right: I am for ever obliged to you: I'll go, and
speak

Speak to my son, this moment: Lady Jane shall be his, without delay. *[Exit.]*

DASHWOULD.

So much for my friend, the Captain: I have settled his business.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mr. Dashwould, I am so distracted—a terrible business has happened.

DASHWOULD.

What's the matter?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Miss Neville, I can't think what is come of her—she is not to be found, high or low. We have searched every where for her. What can be the meaning of this?

DASHWOULD.

Is Malvil gone?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

This very moment: he has no hand in it. He sees, and pities my distress. He is gone to make enquiry. A girl that I was so fond of, and never said an angry word to.

DASHWOULD.

You have been remarkably mild.

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You know how tender I have been of her.—What can have put this into her head? How long has Millamour been gone?—I understand it now. This is his exploit.

DASHWOULD.

You wrong him—I will undertake to discover this plot for you.

Enter BYGROVE.

DASHWOULD.

You can comfort the Lady, Sir; I shall return immediately. *[Exit,*

BYGROVE.

May I take the liberty, Madam—

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Why torment me thus? You are all in a plot against me.

Enter Lady BELL, Lady JANE, and Capt. BYGROVE.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

There, Lady Bell, there is your lover run away with your cousin.

Lady BELL.

I can depend upon her. I can still venture to answer for her honour.

BYGROVE.

She will come back, you need not alarm yourself.

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You have seduced her, for any thing I know. I am distracted by you all, and will hear no more.

[Exit.]

BYGROVE.

Mrs. Bromley, permit me to say a word.

[Exit.]

Lady BELL.

I hope there is nothing amiss. I can rely upon Miss Neville's discretion; I think I can. Come, sister, let us go and enquire. (*going, looks back*) Hey! you two are staying, to say delicate things to each other,

Capt. BYGROVE.

Our difficulties, you know, are at an end. I have my father's orders to follow my inclination. Had Millamour staid, I have a plot would have fixed him your Ladyship's for ever.

Lady JANE.

And we sha'n't see him again this month, perhaps.

Lady BELL.

Let him take his own way. I am only uneasy about Miss Neville at present.

Enter DASHWOULD. (with a letter in his hand)

DASHWOULD.

This way, you are wanted: I have a letter here, that discovers all.

[Exit.]

Lady

Lady BELL.

But what does it say? Let us go and hear it directly. [Exeunt.]

Scene, an Apartment at Madam LA ROUGE's.

Enter MILLAMOUR, and LA ROUGE.

MILLAMOUR.

Have you sent to Dashwould?

LA ROUGE.

Yes, I have sent him letter.

MILLAMOUR.

Miss Neville here you say?

LA ROUGE.

She come an hour ago, all in tear.

MILLAMOUR.

Then she is safe.—You are sure you never said any thing to Sir John about the gaming business?

LA ROUGE.

Sur, mon honneur. What I tell? I know noting. And I not see Sir John in my house, it is two tree months.

MILLAMOUR.

You shall come, and confront Malvil, at Mrs. Bromley's.

LA

LA ROUGE.

Bagatelle! what you go dere for?—Bo, dis is all put me off—pay your littel bill. Vat is money to you? I so poor, you so rich.

MILLAMOUR.

You did not say that I should deceive Lady Bell?

LA ROUGE.

Monfieur Malvil, he tell you so?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes; and I tremble for the consequence.

LA ROUGE.

It is one great villain—I great respect for you. Vous est aimable. Monfieur Malvil, he is great fripon. And I ver sorry he be marry to Mademoiselle Neville.

MILLAMOUR.

Married to her?

LA ROUGE.

You not know it?—He is marry to her dis day. He take my apartment tree week ago. He not have it known dat he is marry for five six day; write letter to me dis afternoon; he must be let in ver private; de servant not to see him; go up de back stairs to her room, and so l' affaire est faite.

MILLAMOUR.

And thus he has seduced her from her relations?
Let me see the letter. (*reads aside*)

LA ROUGE.

I not tink him so bad to talk of me, and tell such
parcel of story, vid not one word of true.

MILLAMOUR.

So; here he is in black and white. To come privately, is he? If I could detain him here, and prevent all means of his escaping——

LA ROUGE.

Escape? Up back stairs, he must come thro' dat
apartment; (*pointing to a door in the back scene*) I
turn de key in de back door: voila votre prisonier;
he is prisoner.

MILLAMOUR.

Exquisite woman! I'll lock this door, and secure
the key. (*locks the door in the back scene*) Hush!
(*A rap at the street door*)

LA ROUGE.

Le voila: he come now.

MILLAMOUR.

Fly, let him in; send once more to Dashwould; I
want him this instant; fly, dispatch.

LA

LA ROUGE.

I do all vat you bid me. [Exit.

MILLAMOUR.

It is honest of her to make this discovery. If this be Malvil—a soft whisper that—(*listens*) 'Tis he, I hear his voice—I shall have the merit of defeating villainy, and protecting innocence—Don't I hear Miss Neville? (*goes to a room-door*) Miss Neville!

NEVILLE. (*entering*)

Madam La Rouge!--Oh, Sir! what brings you hither?

MILLAMOUR.

It is your interest to hear me; your happiness depends upon it.

Miss NEVILLE.

Alas! I fear I have been too rash.

MILLAMOUR.

Command your attention, and listen to me: Malvil has planned your ruin.

Miss NEVILLE.

Impossible: he has too much honour: why will you alarm me thus? I am unfortunate, and you, Sir, need not add to my afflictions.

MILLAMOUR.

You have trusted yourself to a villain : he means, at midnight, to gain access to your person ; to triumph over your honour, and then leave you to remorse, to shame, and misery. Read that letter. (*gives it her, and she reads it to herself*) She's an amiable girl, and I dare say, will make an admirable wife—— Hark ! I hear him in yonder room. Suppress each wild emotion of surprize, and wait the event.

Miss NEVILLE.

I can scarce believe what I read. What have I done ? (*weeps*) You have led me into a maze of doubts and fears, and there I wander, distracted, lost ; without a clue to guide me.

MILLAMOUR.

I will direct you : rely upon me.

Enter DASHWOULD, Lady BELL, and Lady JANE.

DASHWOULD.

La Rouge has told us the whole story.

MILLAMOUR.

Hush ! no noise.

Lady BELL.

My sweet girl, how could you frighten me so ?

Miss

Miss NEVILLE.

I blush for what I have done. But Mrs. Bromley's cruelty drove me to despair.

Lady JANE.

My dear, all will be well: don't flurry yourself.

Lady BELL.

Tho' my aunt vexed you, why run away from me?

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY, BYGROVE, Sir HARRY, and
Capt. BYGROVE.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Where is this unhappy girl?

MILLAMOUR.

A moment's patience.

Enter LA ROUGE.

MILLAMOUR.

Is he safe?

LA ROUGE.

He is dere in the room as safe as in Bastile.

MILLAMOUR.

Speak to him thro' the door: now all be silent.

LA ROUGE.

Monfieur Malvil, open de door.

L 3

MAL-

MALVIL. (*within*)

Do you open it, you have the key.

LA ROUGE.

De key, it is dere: Miss Neville, it is gone to bed;
all de house asleep: I in de dark; now is your time.

MILLAMOUR. (*to La Rouge*)

Hush! here is the key. (*takes away the lights*)

MALVIL.

Will you dispatch?

LA ROUGE.

Attendez: here is de key: I let you out. (*unlocks
the door*)

MALVIL. (*entering*)

All in darknes: Is she gone to bed?

LA ROUGE. (*leading him*)

She wait for you: vere was you marry?

MALVIL.

St. James's parish: Sir Harry has not succeeded:
she prefers me. Say nothing of it yet awhile.

LA ROUGE.

No; not a yord: tenez, I get light for you.

[*Exit.*

MAL-

MALVIL.

So; I have carried my point. The family will be glad to patch up the affair, to avoid the disgrace.

LA ROUGE. (*Entering*)

Ah! you look en cavalier; ver good apartment for you; and dere is good picture. It is Tarquin and Lucrece; Tarquin go to ravish de lady in de night. It was villain, was it not?

MALVIL.

A terrible fellow!

LA ROUGE.

And dis room it is velle furnish: look about you; more picture, and all original. (*turns him to the company*)

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha! your servant Mr. Malvil!

MALVIL.

Hell and confusion!

MILLAMOUR. (*taking him by the arm*)

There are bounds and limits even to virtue.

DASHWOULD. (*at his other arm*)

Morals are capable of mathematical demonstration.

Lady BELL. (*to Miss Neville*)

Let us withdraw from all this bustle. Sir Harry, step this way, I want you. [*Exit with Miss Neville, Lady Jane, and Sir Harry.*]

DASHWOULD.

This is all according to the fitness of things.

MILLAMOUR.

Something voluptuous in meaning well.

BYGROVE.

Dashwould, your ridicule is now in season to expose such a character. He is fair game, and hunt him down as you please.

LA ROUGE.

Ah! Monsieur Tartuffe. [*Exit laughing.*]

MALVIL.

The fiends about me!—Mr. Bygrove, you are a thinking man, I appeal to you.

MILLAMOUR.

I appeal to this letter, Sir. (*reads*)

“Madam La Rouge.”

“Miss Neville has this day given me her hand in marriage. I would not have it known for some time. Conduct me to her apartment, unknown to your servants. The way up the back stairs will be best. Your secrecy shall be rewarded by”

“Martin Malvil.”

OMNES.

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha!

MALVIL.

The letter is forged——let me see it. (*snatches at it*)

DASHWOULD.

And I have another proof! this anonymous scrawl, written by your direction, and sent to Miss Neville, to give a stab to the character of Sir Harry. Do you deny it, Sir? Your secretary is now in the house; I brought him with me; he is ready to prove you the author of this mean, clandestine mischief.

MALVIL.

All false; all a forgery. Where is this French impostor? Where is your witness, Sir? (*to Dashwould*) I'll put them both to the proof, this moment.

[Exit.]

DASHWOULD.

No private parlying.

[Exit.]

BYGROVE.

No; we must all hear.

[Exit.]

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Yes; all must hear.

[Exit.]

MILLAMOUR.

My presence may be necessary.

[Going.]

Capt. BYGROVE.

Millamour, stay and give me joy.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Of what ?

Capt. BYGROVE.

The idol of my heart ! To-morrow makes her mine.

MILLAMOUR.

Well, I give you joy. Who is she ?

Capt. BYGROVE.

My Lady Bell, thou dear fellow : come, let us go and see what they are about ?

MILLAMOUR.

Let us go and see who shall cut the other's throat.

Capt. BYGROVE.

A pleasant employment.

MILLAMOUR.

You shall tear this heart out, before you tear Lady Bell from me.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Very well ; have your frolic—This works as I could wish. [Exit.]

MILLAMOUR.

Despair and phrenzy ! if she is capable of a treachery like this——

Enter

Enter Lady BELL.

Lady BELL.

You have done some good at last, Mr. Millamour.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Bell! (*pauses and looks at her*) I once thought——but you will break my heart.

Lady BELL.

It will bend a little, but never break.

MILLAMOUR.

Will you listen to me? There is a tyrant fair, and you have interest with her; you can serve me; all the joys of life are center'd there.

Lady BELL. (*smiles aside*)

He is mine against the world. And so you want my interest? That's lucky, for I have a favour to request of you.

MILLAMOUR.

Is there a favour in the power of man, you may not command at my hands?

Lady BELL.

You are very good, Sir; there is a person, but the levity of his temper——

MILLAMOUR. (*aside*)

She means me——Your beauty will reclaim him.

Lady

Lady BELL. (*smiles at him*)
May I rely upon you?

MILLAMOUR.
What an angel look there was. And do you ask
the question?

Lady BELL.
When sincere affection——

MILLAMOUR.
It is generous to own it.

Lady BELL.
And since the impression made by——

MILLAMOUR.
Do not hesitate.

Lady BELL.
Made by Captain Bygrove——

MILLAMOUR.
Made by Captain Bygrove (*turns away*)

Lady BELL.
That wounds deep—and if you will assist my fond,
fond hopes,—It will be generous indeed.

MILLAMOUR.
This is a blow I never looked for—Yes, Ma'am,
it

it will be generous,—and in return, if you will intercede for me with Lady Bell——po! with a—with Lady Jane, I say—I say if you will intercede for me with Lady Jane——

Lady BELL.

Oh! by all means. And as I approve of your choice, (*he walks away, she follows him*) I hope you will approve of mine; and by mutual acts of friendship, we may promote each other's happiness.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

Malvil is detected.

Lady BELL.

And Sir Harry has settled every thing with Miss Neville. Go and wish him joy. (*Exit Dashwould*) My sweet friend will be happy at last. (*going*)

MILLAMOUR. (*taking her hand*)

But you won't marry the Captain?

Lady BELL.

Will you make interest for me?

MILLAMOUR.

How can you torment me thus?

Lady BELL.

You have done some service, and you may now entertain a degree of hope. (*smiling at him*) But have you another copy of verses for my aunt?

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

How can you? (*kisses her hand; Exit Lady Bell*)
—She yields, and I am blessed indeed.

Enter BYGROVE, MALVIL, and Capt. BYGROVE.

BYGROVE.

The fact is too clear, Mr. Malvil.

MALVIL.

And shall the word of that French impostor—

MILLAMOUR.

She has acted fairly, Sir; what reparation can you make the lady whose ruin you have attempted?

MALVIL.

Mrs. Bromley promised her a fortune, and I have promised her marriage.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

And I forbid the banns. Sir Harry has concluded a match with Miss Neville: I should have thought him ridiculous, if he had not.

MALVIL.

That you will do, whether he deserves it or not.

MILLAMOUR.

You, Sir, deserve something worse than ridicule. You are thoroughly understood. Your tenderness
for

for your neighbour, is malignant curiosity; your half hints, that hesitate slander, speak the louder; and your silence, that affects to suppress what you know, is a mute, that strangles.

MALVIL.

The probity of my character, Sir——

DASHWOULD.

Ay, probity is the word. He has had pretty perquisites from his probity; legacies, trust money, and the confidence of families. For aught I see, probity is as good a trade as any a going.

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha!

MALVIL.

The still voice of truth is lost: you are all in a combination.

BYGROVE.

And you have forced me to be of the number.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

MALVIL.

Mrs. Bromley! you will judge with candour.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Oh! Sir, it is all too plain.

MAL-

MALVIL.

It is in vain to contend : I shall be cautious what I say of any of you : my heart is with you all.

[Exit.]

BYGROVE.

Farewell, hypocrite !

OMNES.

Ha ! ha ! ha !

Enter Lady BELL, Miss NEVILLE, Sir HARRY, and Lady JANE.

Lady BELL.

Here, Sir Harry, in the presence of this company, I give you, in this friend of mine, truth, good sense, and virtue. Take her, Sir, and now you have got a treasure.

Sir HARRY. (*to Miss Neville*)

It shall be my pride to raise you to that sphere of life, which your merit, and your sufferings from——
(*looks at Mrs. Bromley*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Why fix on me, Sir?

Sir HARRY.

They are much mistaken, who can find no way of shewing their superior rank, but by letting their weight fall on those, whom fortune has placed beneath them.

DASH

DASHWOULD.

And that sentiment, however I may rattle, I wish impressed upon all the patrons of poor relations, throughout his Majesty's dominions.

Miss NEVILLE.

Mrs. Bromley, I have much to say to you. My obligations to you, I shall never forget. I am not ashamed, even in the presence of Sir Harry, to own the distress in which you found me. If at any time I have given offence; if under your displeasure, I have been impatient, you will allow for an education that raised me much above my circumstances. That education shall teach me to act as becomes Sir Harry's Lady, with affection, with duty to him; and to you, madam, with gratitude, for that bounty which saved me from calamity and ruin.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Your words overpower me. I feel that I have done wrong. I now see, that to demand in return, for favours conferred, an abject spirit, and mean compliance, is the worst usury society knows of. I rejoice at your good fortune: your merit deserves it.
(*they embrace*)

DASHWOULD.

Why this is as it should be.—Mr. Bygrove, I hope soon to wish you joy.

BYGROVE.

Compared to Malvil, thou art an honest fellow, and I thank you.

DASHWOULD.

Millamour, is there no recompence for your virtue? In a modern comedy, you would be rewarded with a wife.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Bell has more than poetical justice in her power. I wish Sir John were here: he would now see me reclaimed from every folly, by that lady.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

If it is so, I can now congratulate you both.

Lady BELL.

It is even so, aunt; the whim of the present moment. Mr. Millamour has served my amiable friend, and I have promised him my hand——and so (*holds up both hands*) which will you have? Puzzle about it, and know your own mind if you can.

MILLAMOUR.

With rapture thus I snatch it to my heart.

Lady BELL.

Sister, what Nunnery will you go to? Mr. Bygrove, command your son to take her.

Capt. BYGROVE.

That command I have obeyed already.

Lady

Lady JANE.

Since the truth must out; we made use of a strata-
gem to fix my sister, and that gentleman.

Lady BELL.

To fix yourself, if you please. I knew you would
be married before me.

MILLAMOUR.

Dashwould, give me your hand. Your wit shall
enliven our social hours, and while I laugh with
you at the events of life, you shall see me endea-
vour to weed out of my own mind every folly.

DASHWOULD.

You do me honour, Sir. And, if Mr. Bygrove
will now and then give and take a joke——

BYGROVE.

As often as you please: but take my advice,
and don't lose your friend for your joke.

DASHWOULD.

By no means, Mr. Bygrove;——except now and
then, when the friend is the worst of the two.

MILLAMOUR.

Well, there is some weight in Mr. Bygrove's ob-
M 2 servation;

—and yet, as Dashwould says, conversation without a zest of wit, may flatten into a sort of insipidity, and——

Lady BELL.

Oh! to be sure: change your mind about it.

MILLAMOUR.

There is one subject, Lady Bell, upon which my mind will never change. The varieties of life, till now distracted my attention.

*But when our hearts victorious beauty draws,
We feel its pow'r, and own its sov'reign laws;
To that subservient all our passions move,
And ev'n my constancy shall spring from love.*

E P I L O G U E.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. MATTOCKS.

IF after Tragedy 'tis made a rule,
To jest no more, I'll be no titt'ring fool,
To jog you with a joke in Tragic doze,
And shake the dew-drops from the weeping rose.
Prudes of each sex affirm, and who denies?
That in each tear a whimp'ring Cupid lies.
To such wise formal folk, my answer's simple;
A thousand Cupids revel in a dimple!
From those soft nests, with laughter, out they rush,
Perch'd on your heads, like small birds in a bush.
Beauty resistless in each smile appears:
Are you for dimples, ladies, or for tears?
Dare they in Comedy our mirth abridge?
Let us stand up for giggling privilege;
Assert our rights, that laughter is no sin,
From the screw'd simper, to the broad-fac'd grin.

So much for self; now turn we to the Poet:
"KNOW YOUR OWN MIND."---Are any here who know it?
To know one's mind is a hard task indeed,
And harder still for us, by all agreed.
Cards, balls, beaux, feathers, round the eddy whirling,
Change every moment, while the hair is curling.
The Greeks say---"Know Thyself"---I'm sure I find,
I know Myself that I don't Know my Mind.

Know you your minds, wise Men?---Come, let us try.
I have a worthy cit there in my eye; (looking up)
Tho' he to sneer at us takes much delight,
He cannot fix where he shall go to-night:
His pleasure and his peace are now at strife,
He loves his bottle, and he fears his wife.

He'll

*He'll quit this house, not knowing what to do ;
 The Shakespeare's Head first gives a pull or two,
 But with a sideling struggle he gets through.
 Darts across Russel-street : then with new charms,
 The Syren, Luxury, his bosom warms,
 And draws him in the vortex of the Bedford Arms.
 Happy this night !---But when comes wife and sorrow ?
 " To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow."*

*I see some laughers here ; pray which of you
 Know your own Minds ?---in all this house but few !
 Wits never know their Minds ;---our Minor Bards,
 Changing from bad to worse, now spin Charades.
 O'er Law and Physic we will draw a curtain ;
 There nothing but uncertainty is certain :
 Grave looks, wigs, coats,---the Doctors now relinquish 'em,
 They're right,---from Undertakers to distinguish 'em.*

*The Courtiers, do 'em justice, never doubt,
 Whether 'tis better to be in or out.
 Some Patriots too, know their own mind and plan ;
 They're firmly fix'd, to get in when they can ;
 Gamesters don't waver ; they all hazards run,
 For some must cheat, and more must be undone.
 Great Statesmen know their minds, but ne'er reveal 'em ;
 We never knew their secrets, 'till we feel 'em.*

*Grant me a favour, Critics, don't say nay ;
 Be of one Mind with me, and like this Play ;
 Thence will two wonders rise : Wits will be kind,
 Nay more---behold a Woman Knows her Mind !*

THE
SCHOOL
FOR
GUARDIANS:

A
COMEDY,

IN THREE ACTS.

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

—— Subitum, et miserabile longum
Attendit Thymele; Thymele tunc rustica discit.

JUV.

THE
SCENOGRAPHIC
FOR
GUARDIANS
OF
COMEDY
IN THREE ACTS
Performed at the
THEATRE ROYAL
COVENT-GARDEN.

— Subitum, et miserabile longum
Alacris Thyrolo: Thyrolo tunc tunc dicit.
Juv.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Miss ELLIOT.

MAY I intrude upon your patience for a minute?

*Ladies and gentlemen, before the opening of the
play,*

*Just to excuse an accident, which I hope has no mischief
in it,*

*I fain, if you'll permit, a word or two would say,
I hope you'll not be angry; but we've got no prologue for
to-night,*

*And so I thought it was best to come and tell ye all the
truth downright.*

*I went to our Poet, and I spoke to him all I could,
But he said he had not leisure, tho' I know it's in his
power if he would.*

*'A prologue, ma'am,' says he!—"Yes, Sir, a pro-
logue if you please."*

*And then I did so entreat the man, and beg, and pray,
and teaze.*

*I told him, "You know, Sir, what a miserable plight
we all are in,*

*To frown upon the performers, when pit, box, and gal-
lery begin;*

*Whu—go the catcalls—dub—dub—dub---each dreadful
critick's stick*

*Prólog'—throw him over—won't ye ha some orange chips
---Prólôgué---Cries o' London--Musick!"*

All this and more I said, but he, determin'd still,

In

In formal fustian thus declar'd his will.

*"Oft have I tried" [seems puzzled]—something about
his stile,*

And how he felt the town's indulgent smile.

*"Were I again to try my scanty vein,
I'd beg protection for the feeble strain.*

*But then to sue—he paus'd and rubb'd his head—
To sue—when fam'd MOLIERE the stage doth tread,
Were to profane the manes of the dead.*

*MOLIERE, of old, and still with rapture seen,
The legislator of the comic scene!*

*To bid his SIMPLE GIRL assert the stage,
And, if she pleases, strive to mend the age,
This was my motive; this my only aim;
Heedless of gain; no candidate for fame.*

*An audience will weigh all in equal scales,
For justice, and not party, here prevails."*

*Thus spoke the bard, and then with long steps march'd
away;*

*And now I am left alone to apologize for this night's
play.*

*We'll strive to make you laugh, if our aim be not per-
verted:*

*Pray, how d'ye find yourselves?—Are ye in good humour,
and willing to be diverted?*

*If you approve,
The Leidger Critic then no more I'll dread,
Who prints his malice at a woman's head!*

Who

*Who drop by drop his venom doth distil,
While MOTHER DULLNESS guides the hireling's quill.
Lull'd in her lap, strange wonders he descries,
And TERENCE seems—a Frenchman to his eyes!
From thence he issues foul decrees on plays,
Adorns with scandal, and lampoons with praise.
One smile from you defeats the sland'rer's aim;
His calumny, like your APPLAUSE, is fame.
From your applause our mimic glories rise;
In pleasing you my whole ambition lies.*

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

BRUMPTON,
BELFORD,
OLDCASTLE,
LOVIBOND,
BRISK,
PETER,

Mr. WOODWARD,
Mr. SMITH.
Mr. SHUTER.
Mr. DUNSTALL,
Mr. DYER.
Mr. MORGAN,

W O M E N.

MARY ANN,
HARRIET,
BRIDGET,

Miss ELLIOT.
Miss WILFORD.
Mrs. MAHON.

Scene L O N D O N.

THE
School for Guardians,

A
COMEDY.

ACT the FIRST.

Enter BRUMPTON, *and* BRISK.

BRUMPTON.

IS my father gone out, Brisk?

BRISK.

Yes, Sir ;—Sir Theodore is gone out.

BRUMPTON.

We have been pretty handsomely lectured here this morning, Brisk.

BRISK

BRISK.

Yes, Sir, we have had wherewithal to edify ourselves. I suppose we shall lie at Tom Tilbury's at Bagshot to-night, Sir.

BRUMPTON.

Where?

BRISK.

Tom Tilbury's, Sir; only just to break the neck of our journey: for I suppose now, you'll drop all thoughts of this other lady—I forget her name—Ay! Miss Mary Ann Richley—she has no chance now, I reckon, Sir.

BRUMPTON.

Why, you senseless numskull!—As sure as I am Charles Brumpton, Esq; she shall be Mrs. Brumpton; and upon the death of my very good father, she'll be a baronet's lady, that's all.

BRISK.

And yet there is some truth in what Sir Theodore says. Beauty is but a frail, perishable sort of a commodity; and if you are disinherited for it, the lady's charms will not pay your poor servant, Brisk, his board-wages; a feature, or a smile can't go to market; a pawn-broker will lend nothing upon the tip of an ear: though indeed she may mortgage her person; but that I take it will be for her own advantage; we shall get nothing but a comely pair of horns by it, Sir, with submission.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Why you talk a frothy kind of nothing at a tolerable rate, Brisk.

BRISK.

I have shewn you one side of the medal, now behold the reverse, Sir. When you marry an ugly woman, there is no great pleasure, to be sure, in beholding her: but then the woman has some valuable parchments, such as leases, bonds, and mortgages; and I, Sir, shall live in tolerable plight with you, which to so good a master——

BRUMPTON.

Leave prating, firrah, and do as I ordered you: put on your farmer's dress, go directly to the object I adore; let her know you are come from her guardian in the country, and have his orders to take her home under your care. Convey her safe to my arms, and I shall reward you.

BRISK.

But, Sir——

BRUMPTON.

No arguing: about it streight.

BRISK.

You know how many blanketings and blows I have suffered in your service, Sir.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Sirrah, no words. Go and see who's at the door.

BRISK.

You have marred many an excellent plot of mine, Sir. You know you cannot help meddling, when I undertake a scheme. If you'll promise me, Sir, not to——

BRUMPTON.

Will you see who's at the door?

BRISK.

I am gone, Sir.

[Exit.]

BRUMPTON.

Ha! ha!—I shall most certainly carry her off. How Sir Theodore will be astonished when he finds she is an heiress! ha! ha!--it is the pleasantest adventure.

Enter BELFORD.

BELFORD.

Brumpton, good-morrow!----always in spirits, I see.

BRUMPTON.

My dear Belford, nothing depresses my spirits: though you thought they were too high last night, and were for letting me a little blood. You make

no-

nothing of displaying an ell of sword-blade in defence of your mistress's top-knot.

BELFORD.

Why you know I love too tenderly to bear the test of raillery: it is the infirmity of my temper; why would you put me to it?

BRUMPTON.

And you that know my turn of mind, why would you be angry with me? If in your phrase I am a coxcomb, with all my heart, i'faith! but take this along with you; what you mean as a term of reproach, I receive as a compliment to the materials nature has been pleased to compound in this happy frame of mine.

BELFORD.

If self-applause be philosophy, you have a comfortable share.

BRUMPTON.

I have, Sir, and while my happiness is preserved by it, keep you the gravity and good sense, that make you too refined to be pleased, too wise to be merry, and too knowing to be contented. I am in a fair way to be successful, without any trouble at all; you are likely to be most scurvily disappointed after a world of pains. An humble bow, which my dancing-master taught me, while I laughed at him; a fashionable coat, for which, if my taylor is ever paid, he will laugh at me; an intriguing snuff-box, and an apt valet de chambre, all these make love for me, and——

BELFORD.

And you assume the merit of the conquest.

BRUMPTON.

Oh! yes, when the trouble is over, I take the reward. Did you ever know a general officer, who, when the horse and the foot, and the right and left wing have carried the day for him, did not claim to himself both the honour and the booty? But you make a toil of a pleasure: love, which to me is a scene of delight, to you is a drudgery; your temper grows as sour as a prude's when the sermon is long; and as hot as a Welshman, if you laugh at his pedigree; or a professed sharper, if you doubt his honour, after he has copped the dice, and picked your pocket of your money.

BELFORD.

Why I own I am piqued, and naturally, If any friend of mine, out of mere spleen, speak detractingly of the person I admire. Absent I see her, hear her, and my imagination gloats on her every charm.

BRUMPTON.

And you are so easily alarmed, that little difficulties are the Alps and Pireneans in your way. Now my faith in these matters removes mountains. But indeed in all things we are opposite characters: you sigh, I sing; you fret, I am gay; you upon a disappointment, "Furies, death, and rage!"——I burst into a laugh, and what a whimsical world we live in?——ha! ha!——But come, I will hear your melancholy story. Well, the old dragon, I suppose, watches the Hesperian fruit.

BEL-

BELFORD.

He does, Sir: he keeps her locked up, as a miser does his gold, not to be made use of till his death, and then to fall into hands that won't know the value of it. She is inaccessible, and her guardian, old Lovibond, proposes to marry her himself.

BRUMPTON.

And so like the tyrant of old, intends to tack a living and dead body together.

BELFORD.

Even so: my dear Brumpton, there should be an act of parliament to hinder these old fellows from stopping the propagation of the species.

BRUMPTON.

You are too hard upon 'em: they are seldom guilty of that mischief. I have known 'em have twins at a birth; that is, when some such coxcomb as myself gives them a helping hand; and then the old fellow cocks his hat upon it, and totters about so vigorously, wondering how the babes resemble him in every particular; whilst the mother knows, that she followed the example of the Grecian painter, and took a feature from every one of her acquaintance. If he prevents your marrying her, take your revenge that way.

BELFORD.

How absurd! her heart I am sure is mine. I used to visit there; but now no admittance.

N 2

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Now my business goes on without any trouble or difficulty. My old dragon is in the country, and has left his fair ward, the sweetest girl, my dear Belford——

BELFORD.

You described her yesterday but few removes from an idiot.

BRUMPTON.

Pardon me : she is simple indeed, but such a simplicity ! It just serves to shew that injustice has been done her in her education, but in her every turn she gives such tokens of sensibility ! she has beauty without knowing it ; certain wild graces, rather than accomplishments, and talents instead of sense.

BELFORD.

Po ! a mere rustic beauty.

BRUMPTON.

There now, derogating from her merit, and yet I am calm ! The truth is she has been brought up in the country, and wickedly kept in ignorance, that she might fall an easy prey to her guardian. But I have raised a spirit in her.

BELFORD.

And how the devil did you gain access to her ?

BRUMPTON.

I was going to tell you. Old Nestor is out of town,
and

and has left her in the care of the two veriest simpletons that ever whistled for want of thought at a country fair: but gold, Sir, gold, that speaks all languages, and adapts itself to all capacities, has pleaded most eloquently for me. But, come, I positively must leave you.

BELFORD.

Nay, if it must be so——

BRUMPTON.

My dear Belford, Cupid direct your arrows——
[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E *a Street.*

Enter LOVIBOND, *and* OLDCASTLE.

LOVIBOND.

And but this moment returned, Mr. Oldcastle!

OLDCASTLE.

Just this moment stepped out of the machine.

LOVIBOND.

Well! and now I suppose you have prudently laid aside all thoughts of matrimony.

OLDCASTLE.

You are a comical man, brother Lovibond. I have taken my measures; to-morrow makes me a bridegroom, and my fair ward, Miss Mary Ann, a bride.

LOVIBOND.

And a little time will make you——

OLDCASTLE.

Happy : tho', by that significant look, you have your doubts.

LOVIBOND.

I have, Sir : I have a shrewd guess that——

OLDCASTLE.

Then you'll be out in your guess.

LOVIBOND.

I wish your horns a'n't out first.

OLDCASTLE.

Well said, and without any apprehension for yourself. You are still determined to marry Mary Ann's sister Harriet I suppose.

LOVIBOND.

That's quite another business; what I do, is no rule for your actions.

OLDCASTLE.

It is as I ever said : each man is still looking at the hump upon his neighbour's back, but never thinks of casting an eye over his own shoulder. I warrant me now you, in your grand climacteric, will tell me I am old.

LOVIBOND.

Full ten years before me in the race of life. Besides, you are a superannuated batchelor; a stranger to the ways of wedlock. I am enured to the service. Your sister, Mr. Oldcastle, could have told you what a desperate good husband I was. But, lack a day! you begin late. Mercy on your forehead, say I, mercy on your forehead!

OLDCASTLE.

How blind some people are when they have taken a thing in their heads!—ha! ha!

LOVIBOND.

Well! well! laugh on. But you that have been for ever a cenfor of your neighbours, for ever fleering and jibing at the married state——

OLDCASTLE.

And a pleasant topic it is! why matrimony affords a little comedy in every family one knows. Now the education I have given Mary Ann——

LOVIBOND.

Is the worst in the world,

OLDCASTLE.

The very best! I have trained her up in plain simplicity. Woman's wit teems with contrivances to disgrace her husband. Yet you would educate Harriet in this profligate town!

LOVIBOND.

Ay, and I have taught her to know right from wrong.

OLDCASTLE.

You have indulged her in every whimfy this fertile town affords.

LOVIBOND.

I have shewn her the world.

OLDCASTLE.

Have not you carried her to plays?

LOVIBOND.

To see folly ridiculed.

OLDCASTLE.

To profligate comedies?

LOVIBOND.

The stage is the school of virtue.

OLDCASTLE.

The school of sin and impudence!

LOVIBOND.

Where vice undergoes the lash of satire,

OLDCASTLE.

Where vice is made alluring, provoking!

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

Where young ladies may learn——

OLDCASTLE.

The use of dark-closets, back-stairs, and ladders of rope.

LOVIBOND.

Where they may learn to put on the veil of modesty,

OLDCASTLE.

To put on the breeches, and escape from their guardians.

LOVIBOND.

Where they are taught to respect grey-headed authority!

OLDCASTLE.

To make a cuckold of authority! I know the ways of 'em all! their cards, routs, operas, Soho-assemblies, all contrivances to excite curiosity, kindle desire, prompt inclination, and send 'em all dancing a jig to destruction.

LOVIBOND.

Common-place invective! Harriet will know how to avoid——

OLDCASTLE.

She will know how to deceive you.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

She will have too much honour.

OLDCASTLE.

She will have too much wit. Now Mary-Ann has no wild notions, and of course no dangerous curiosity.

LOVIBOND.

Her curiosity is to come. She will fall a prey to the first powdered coxcomb that bows to her.

OLDCASTLE.

Her simplicity will preserve her.

LOVIBOND.

But when the serpents of this town begin to whisper in her ear——

OLDCASTLE.

They'll have no opportunity. She is snug in a little box of a house, which I have taken in the name of Mr. Biddulph. I have another lodging in my own name, where I transact my affairs. Nobody will see her; and when the nine day's wonder is over, I shall pack off to the country, and so escape from impertinence.

LOVIBOND.

Well! well! I can't but laugh at your system of education! Ha! ha! marry her if you will; and then, on account of your age and infirmities, you may

may do the business of your office by deputy. Ha!
 ha! a plan of simplicity! [Exit.

OLDCASTLE.

Brother Lovibond, a good day to you—I wish
 you success—Ha! ha! a town-education for a
 young girl!

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

How her old goaler will look when he returns to
 town, and finds she has broke prison!—Hey! is
 not that Mr. Oldcastle?

OLDCASTLE.

Mr. Brumpton!—I rejoice to see you.

BRUMPTON.

My dear friend, you are come in the very crisis of
 my fate.

OLDCASTLE.

Recover your senses a little, and tell me at your
 leisure what is this mighty business.

BRUMPTON.

Oh! business of such a nature!

OLDCASTLE.

You are in request among the ladies, no doubt
 —Now will he lie like an attorney's clerk. (*aside*)
 You are going to help some worthy gentleman to an
 heir to his estate, I warrant me.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

I am going to help my father to a grandson.

OLDCASTLE.

Going to be married !

BRUMPTON.

This day may perhaps crown my joys. Some certain fumblers at this end of the town, who were a little alarmed at the proportions of this leg, intend to light their windows upon it ; the Court of Aldermen is preparing all demonstrations of joy ; and their unhappy wives are going into deep mourning upon the occasion !

OLDCASTLE.

The same confident fop he ever was ! Well, and my friend Sir Theodore, what says he to all this ?

BRUMPTON.

You know his way ; the same old crabbed humour. He has made a match for me elsewhere with one that—I would not deny the lady her merit—she preserves and pickles well, and is a very notable keeper of accounts,

OLDCASTLE.

She has a fortune, I presume.

BRUMPTON.

Does not want acres.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

And you prefer one without any.

BRUMPTON.

You mistake me! she's an heiress; it is not clear that she is of age, but as soon as she comes to years of discretion——

OLDCASTLE.

Then she may play the fool as fast as she will. But how did you bring this about, pray?

BRUMPTON.

An old way that I have: I came, saw, and conquered. I saw her at her window——Such blooming sweetness! Her eyes were through my heart at once: love inspired me with due courage.

OLDCASTLE.

That was right: a bold stroke for a wife.

BRUMPTON.

I drank tea with her the very next evening. I must indeed admit, that her understanding is not the most accomplished.

OLDCASTLE.

So best: never marry a wit.

BRUMPTON.

She is at present rather in a state of ignorance: but from those blue eyes she occasionally darts such glances,

glances, as bespeak a mind susceptible of the highest refinement:

OLDCASTLE,

Where does she live?

BRUMPTON:

In the very next street.

OLDCASTLE:

What that street there?

BRUMPTON.

Yes, that: under the care of the veriest muck-worm!

OLDCASTLE.

He means me, I fear. (*aside*) And her name, pray?

BRUMPTON:

Miss Mary Ann Richley.

OLDCASTLE.

Wounds! what a discovery here is! (*aside*)

BRUMPTON.

Her guardian's name is Biddulph. Perhaps you may know him.

OLDCASTLE.

No, not I. The young rake-hell! (*aside*)

BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

He means to abuse his trust, and confine youth and beauty within the arms of age and ugliness. There's an old rogue for you! Does not he deserve to be hanged?

OLDCASTLE.

What a young villain!

(aside)

BRUMPTON.

I beg your pardon: I did not hear.

OLDCASTLE.

I am seized with an ugly fit of coughing——
(coughs) But you should consider; the marriage-act is very strict, and requires the consent of prudent people.

BRUMPTON.

Po! that's nothing. Abuse Scotland as they will, it enables us to evade the laws of England. Well now, adieu!——Oh! I forgot to tell you. She'll be mine this very day. Brisk, my fellow, who is a footman of talents, is to go to her as a tenant from the country, come to town with old Bid-dulph's commands to carry her down with him in the fly. She is so simple she will believe it; and the oafs about her will bite like gudgeons; and so——ha! ha!——I kindle into rapture. I must fly to know the happy tidings.—Did you ever know so happy an adventure?
[Exit.]

OLD-

OLDCASTLE. (*alone*)

I never knew so abandoned a young profligate, nor so vile an adventure!—I'll step and make sure of Mary-Ann this moment. [*Exit.*]

SCENE LOVIBOND'S *House*.

Enter HARRIET.

HARRIET.

To be locked up in this manner with an old rogue of a guardian!—Mr. Belford! Mr. Belford! why won't you be my deliverer? He knows I like him; I have told him so a thousand times; that is my eyes have told him so; and yet he undertakes nothing. Ah! my dear protector! (*seeing Lovibond*)

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

My blossom!—my lovely little ward! to-morrow makes you the queen of my heart. But you must be mild in authority, for you know—

HARRIET.

Yes, I know how tender you have been. Your confining me here so many days, is to me a proof of the tenderest love.

LOVIBOND.

Yes, it is a mark of my affection.

HARRIET.

There are many reasons why I should not venture abroad; more than you dream of.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

You alarm me : what reasons ?

HARRIET.

Why the danger is——No——you'll be for fighting the odious man.

LOVIBOND.

No——I'll not fight——I'll live for you.

HARRIET.

But will you follow my advice, and speak to him calmly, without passion ?

LOVIBOND.

I will. Let me hear : what's the matter ?

HARRIET.

Why that Mr. Belford, whose visits you used to encourage——

LOVIBOND.

I have not liked him a good while——what of him ?

HARRIET.

Oh ! he's a wicked man. He has vile designs in his head, and would fain have me listen to his proposals.

LOVIBOND.

The impudence of the young men of this age !

HARRIET.

Your back is no sooner turned, than he raps at the door, and at the windows, and disgraces me with all the neighbours. My character will be ruined, (*pretends to cry*) unless you find some method to—

LOVIBOND.

Don't be alarmed, my sweet: I'll bar my doors, and you shan't stir out this twelvemonth.

HARRIET.

That won't do.

LOVIBOND.

Then you shall never go out at all.

HARRIET.

That's some comfort. But in the mean time to have my reputation blasted by an abandoned libertine—(*she cries*) Cæsar's wife should not only be virtuous, but free from suspicion.

LOVIBOND.

The sensible girl! this is owing to her education. Her sister Mary-Ann could not make such a remark. I'll go and swear the peace against him.

HARRIET.

I wish you would.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

I'll do it directly. I'll let him know by a justice's warrant that Cæsar's wife is not to be trifled with.

HARRIET.

And pray tell him, I hate him; that he may come as often as he will under my window, but it will be to no purpose, for I shall not endeavour to let him in.

LOVIBOND.

He shall hear it.

HARRIET.

Let him know that, though he is young, and handsome, all his charms are lost upon me.

LOVIBOND.

I'll do it.

HARRIET.

Tell him you have been a father to me: that I consider you still as my father, and that I think it unnatural to love giddy young men, when I can be so much better off with you.

LOVIBOND.

He shall hear it on every side of his ears.

HARRIET.

Ay, but without loss of time. I shan't be easy till he knows my mind.

LOVIBOND.

Nor I. It is fit he should know your mind.

HARRIET.

Yes, and tell him, if he should come when you are out, not all his winning ways shall prevail on me to run away with him.

LOVIBOND.

You have charmed me ; transported me ; ravished me ; get up stairs. I'll seek him this moment——
Ha ! ha !——this all springs from her good sense :
this is knowing right from wrong——ha ! ha !

[*Exit.*]

HARRIET.

Be sure you tell him every word——and if Mr. Belford does but understand every word as I intend it, then I may still wing my flight to his dear arms. A new scheme this of mine ! But love inspired it, and love may crown it with success.

[*Exit.*]

S C E N E OLDCASTLE'S *House.*

Enter PETER *and* BRIDGET.

PETER.

Yes, yes, Bridget ; the gentleman's generous enow, for a matter o'that.

BRIDGET.

And pray, Peter, do the London folk always give
money

money to the like of we, as often as they come in or out of the house?

PETER.

Ay! zure, and the farving folk call it wails. Why, Bridget, poor farvants would not be able to ape all their master's follies, and powder like fine gentry, and curse and swear like Lords, an so be every body did not give at street door more than any thing they get in the house is worth.

BRIDGET.

La! well that's pure, fure enow!

PETER.

As to me, do ye zee, I does not care how often the gentleman comes, and for a matter o'that, I does not care how long master stays in the country.

BRIDGET.

These London ways are comical, that's for fure. *(a rap at the door)* More grife to the mill. Go and open the door, Peter.

PETER.

Go yourself, an you go to that.

BRIDGET.

I shall budge none, not I.

PETER.

Nor I, faith and troth! *(another rap)*

BRIDGET.

Law, how can you be so cross?

O 3

PETER.

PETER.

You put all upon me, that's your way. Who's at the door?

OLDCASTLE. (*within*)

Open the door, you varlets, open the door.

BRIDGET.

Oh! it's master. I'll go.

PETER.

Master!—then I'll go.

BRIDGET.

Stand out of the way, can't you?

PETER.

Stand away yourself: I be ready, ben't I?

BRIDGET.

Farther a field, will you?

OLDCASTLE. (*rapping*)

Within there, open the door, I say.

BRIDGET.

Call here to Peter: he won't let a body.

PETER.

Nobody shall but I, (*opens the door*) Sarvant, master.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

BRIDGET.

Welcome home, master.

OLDCASTLE.

Why am I to wait thus?

PETER.

PETER.

It was all her doings.

BRIDGET.

It was all his doings as well as I.

OLDCASTLE.

Peace, numskulls ! how is every body at home ?

PETER.

Charmingly well.

BRIDGET.

All in pure health, praise for every thing ; and Miss Mary Ann sings about the house like a little bird in a cage.

OLDCASTLE.

Has not she been melancholy since I went into the country ?

BRIDGET.

No, Lord love her, not she.

OLDCASTLE.

No ! *(in a passion)*

BRIDGET.

Yes !—how terrible he looks !

OLDCASTLE.

Did not she long for my return ?

PETER.

Hugeously ! so we did all.

OLDCASTLE.

Vixen! jade! villain! rascal!

PETER.

I'm down o'my knees——

BRIDGET.

So be I—merciful father, how——

OLDCASTLE.

You have obeyed my orders, have you?

PETER.

He'll murder us both, as fure as a gun.

OLDCASTLE.

What you are sneaking away, are you? Oh! it's all too true. Come back, or——

BRIDGET.

Yes, Sir.

PETER.

No, Sir.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! Mary Ann! Mary Ann!——I could never have imagined---call Mary Ann hither——

BOTH.

Yes, Sir. (*they run out*)

OLDCASTLE.

Now will they plot, and put their heads together—Mary Ann!---Mary Ann!---Oh! here she comes.

Enter

Enter MARY ANN, playing with a cup and ball, and singing.

MARY-ANN.

So, you be come, I see.

OLDCASTLE.

Yes, I am come home.

MARY-ANN.

Better late than never. I began to think as how you had forgot poor I. I expected you all the live-long day, so I did; and there did not go by a coach or a cart, or a horse or an afs, but I thought it was you. Ah! I am glad you're come. What's the matter? Ben't you well?

OLDCASTLE.

You have been very well, I hope, since I left you.

MARY-ANN.

Oh! yes, purely. Neither sick nor sorry, not I. By goles, that is not true neither, for last night—

OLDCASTLE.

Last night!-- what of last night?

MARY-ANN.

Little Pompey barked so all night long, I could not sleep a wink.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Is that all? You have not been out any where, have you?

MARY-ANN.

Out!---law, where should I go? I don't like going out in this strange outlandish place. I like the country better by half.

OLDCASTLE.

Well! well! you shall go back soon.

MARY-ANN.

But then mayn't I go and see sifter Harriet first? an ill natured thing that's what she is: she has not been to see poor I, ever since I came to the great town.

OLDCASTLE.

You shall see her. So you passed your time very merrily!

MARY-ANN.

Never better in all my days. But you don't seem glad to see a body.

OLDCASTLE.

Yes, yes; I am glad to see you. The little Jezebel won't tell me a word (*aside*)—shall I tax her with it directly, or wait a little longer to see her cunning?—Let you and I go and chat a little together above stairs.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Ah! you look cros. With all heart, I'll go
—one, two, three, and away. [*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE.

The little frippery, how she carries it off!—I
burn, I'm in a fever: I have had the grafs cut under
my feet. Oh! the young Magdalen! The fly ini-
quity! Mary-Ann, come back I fay.

Enter MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! I see you don't love me—

OLDCASTLE.

You are much mistaken, draw a chair---fit down
---Well! and how have you passed your time in my
absence?

MARY-ANN.

As well as any thing.

OLDCASTLE.

Have you any news?

MARY-ANN.

News!---law, not I---fikins, I fib tho'. I hav
news to tell you.

OLDCASTLE.

Have you? Well!

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Little kitten's dead,

OLDCASTLE.

Indeed!

MARY-ANN.

Ah! if you had seen all its pretty little tricks, and how it played about. It grieved me to lose she. But squirrel's well.

OLDCASTLE.

Is he?

MARY-ANN.

Yes, and so is mackaw.

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! that's good news.

MARY-ANN.

Yes, and I have marked three shirts, and hemmed five handkerchiefs.

OLDCASTLE.

Mighty well! (*pauses and looks at her earnestly*) Mary Ann, this is a wide and dangerous world we live in: scandal, malice, and detraction are ever flying about, constantly on the wing, and spreading pernicious tales to the ruin of every character.

MARY.

MARY-ANN.

You frighten a body, you talk so.

OLDCASTLE.

Draw near, sweet, draw near. Some impertinent neighbours have whispered---but I did not believe 'em—they have said, that while I was in the country, a young gentleman frequented here, and was well received, Mary Ann. But I have laid a wager there was no foundation for any such idle givings out.

MARY-ANN.

How much have you laid?

OLDCASTLE.

Five pounds to four.

MARY-ANN.

All that! make a hedge of it, as you did at the horse-race.

OLDCASTLE.

Why so?

MARY-ANN.

Cause, you'll lose.

OLDCASTLE.

Then there was a young gentleman here?

MARY-ANN.

As fure as a gun. He was here for ever and for ever, morning, noon, and night.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

But, my little lambkin, did not I forbid any visits? I won't be certain, but if my memory does not fail me——

MARY-ANN.

Oh! for a matter o'that, you may be certain: you did forbid it, fure enough.

OLDCASTLE.

And why was I disobeyed, my dear?

MARY-ANN.

It's the surprisngest thing in the world: I'll tell you all about it.

OLDCASTLE.

That's right; let us hear.

MARY-ANN:

I was sitting in the balcony, thinking of no earthly thing, and he passed by on the other side of the way—Ah! he looked as handsome as an angel, and so he made me a low bow: I blushed up to my very ears, and so I got up, and made a low curtesy; and so he kissed his hand, and I could not help smiling at that, and so he bowed again and again, and I curtesied again and again, and then he walked up the street, and down the street, and to and fro, and backwards and forwards; and would you believe it? He did not miss a time making me a bow with all the good nature in the world, and so I was as good natured as he, and if he had staid all night long, I should have staid

staid too, for I thought it would not be right to be outdone in civility.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! those damned balconies, I always hated them. Well! well! go on, Mary Ann.

MARY-ANN.

Well, and so the next day a large, comely fat gentlewoman came to me, and she had three or four band-boxes full of fine things, and she said she had orders to give me my choice of charming lace, and charming ribbons——

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the execrable procurefs! *(aside)*

MARY-ANN.

You are very pretty, my dear. says she, but it's a pity you should be mewed up here. And then she offered me to take me home to her own house, and said she would dizen me out with diamonds, and then a lord would fall in love with me.

OLDCASTLE.

The infernal forcerefs! *(aside)*

MARY-ANN.

And then could you think of her goodness? Indeed I can't help loving her for it. She offered me to go and meet the young gentleman at her house. I thanked her, and took it very kind, but I did not care to go to strange places, and so I said the gentleman might come here if he would.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the travelling milliner! (*aside*) Well, and did he come?

MARY-ANN.

That he did sure enough. And he said the very sight of me cured him of his wounds. Ah! I am sure you can't blame me, for I could not let him die, so I could not. I almost cried my eyes out when little kitten died.

OLDCASTLE.

Brother Lovibond is right. Oh! I dread the rest.
(*aside*)

MARY-ANN.

Ah!—but you are angry now——

OLDCASTLE.

No, not angry. Well? how did he behave?

MARY-ANN.

Ah! he had such a pretty smile, and he gave me this twee: and he gave Bridget and Peter whole handfuls of money.

OLDCASTLE.

What did he say?

MARY-ANN.

Oh! the prettiest words in the world.

OLDCASTLE.

But he did not touch you?

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

By goles, I beg your pardon for that, but he did, though.

OLDCASTLE.

I guessed so. (*aside*)—Go on.

MARY-ANN.

He kissed me a thousand and a thousand times.

OLDCASTLE.

Daggers! daggers! daggers! (*aside*)

MARY-ANN.

And squeezed my hand so tenderly.

OLDCASTLE.

Poison! wormwood! wormwood!

MARY-ANN.

He took me round the neck.

OLDCASTLE.

I thought as much (*aside*)—proceed.

MARY-ANN,

And round the waist, and he—

OLDCASTLE.

Now, now; now for the worst.—How I tremble!

MARY-ANN.

What's the matter with you?

OLDCASTLE.

Nothing——we shall have some rain——my corn shoots; that's all. Did you do nothing more to cure his wounds?

MARY-ANN.

Look you there now! you are angry: ought I to have done more?

OLDCASTLE.

No; enough of all conscience; but, are you sure this was all?

MARY-ANN.

He gave me this fan, and a pair of ear-rings; and I am sure it was very civil of him to shew so much good nature to a stranger.

OLDCASTLE.

Mary Ann, Mary Ann, all his smooth words, all his tendernefs, all his smiles, were baits to entrap you, to ensnare you to your ruin.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but he told me to the contrary, over and over, and over again.

OLDCASTLE.

I know the world: it was all for your destruction. Go up to your room: all this shall be explained to you.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but you are out of humour with a body.

OLDCASTLE.

Do as I bid you.

MARY-ANN.

Yes, that's what I will. By goles, he's a sweet gentleman, for all you, that's what he is. (*aside*)
[*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE. (*alone*)

What an escape have I had! and yet her an ingenuous manner of confessing all, gives me some hopes. I'll read her a lecture, and then I'll go and let Sir Theodore Brumpton know what a villain his son is. Oh! Mary Ann, Mary Ann.

End of the FIRST ACT.

A C T the S E C O N D.

Scene LOVIBOND'S.

Enter HARRIET.

HARRIET.

HOW my heart beats! post haste, gallop! gallop! and no wonder. It's a dangerous experiment I have tried. Could I but convey this letter to Mr. Belford—hush! here comes my turn-key!

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

Well Harriet, I have executed your commission.

HARRIET.

How did he receive it?

LOVIBOND.

Terribly mortified, tho' I thought I marked, as he went off, an odd sort of a dry constrained smile.

HARRIET.

But I shall have no more reason to complain of him, I hope.

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! I almost pitied the poor devil.

HAR-

HARRIET.

He deserves no pity, Mr. Lovibond.

LOVIBOND.

I believe it. But he knows he was engaged in a vain pursuit; he said so himself, and bid me assure you he would lose no more time.

HARRIET.

That revives me.

LOVIBOND.

He will hardly come this way again.

HARRIET.

I don't know what to say to that. (*aside*) I dread the contrary. I am afraid he will not renounce me so easily as you may imagine.

LOVIBOND.

And, pray, what reason have you for thinking so?

HARRIET.

I have terrible proofs against him. While you was out, he came again under my window.

LOVIBOND.

Ay!

HARRIET.

I ran away at the sight of him. But the window being open, he flung this little box into the room with a letter in it.

LOVIBOND.

A letter in it !

HARRIET.

Yes, the wicked contriver ! a letter in it. I ran to the window to throw it to him again, but he was gone, and then it occurred to me that it might not be quite so prudent to throw it into the street, lest it should fall into the hands of malicious people, who might misinterpret appearances to my disadvantage.

LOVIBOND.

That was wisely judged.

HARRIET.

I have been ever since thinking that it ought to be returned, and if I had a proper person——

LOVIBOND.

Who so proper as myself ? Let me have it.

HARRIET.

No, no ; it would affront him more if delivered by a common porter.

LOVIBOND.

Excuse me, I am the fittest person. A letter in a box ! what contrivances they have ! I'll take care he shall have it, and he will look so silly when he perceives that all his schemes are baffled.

HARRIET.

Why indeed, it will astonish him the more, if you deliver it.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

So it will—ha ! ha !——it will be a rare stroke of revenge. Ha ! ha !

HARRIET. (*laughing*)

The newest that ever was.

LOVIBOND.

I like it of all things. But first let me see the contents of his letter.

HARRIET.

Dear heart, not for the world. Would you give the horrid man room to imagine that a girl of character would so much as open the seal of his odious letter ? Let me advise, Mr. Lovibond ; to return it unopened will be the strongest mark of contempt, and the greatest affront that can be put upon him.

LOVIBOND.

There is something in that. Your wisdom charms me. You endear yourself to me more and more every hour.

HARRIET.

Use your own discretion whether to open it or not ! But the reasons I have given——

LOVIBOND.

Are to me conclusive. I'll about this business directly. Ha ! ha ! we'll put the greatest affront in the world upon him. Ha ! ha ! the truest mark of contempt, ha ! ha ! good-by, rose-bud, good-by. [*Exit.*

HARRIET.

Yes, yes, let him have it unopened. If this plot takes, I shall have my utmost wish. And making him my go-between in the business, gives life and spirit to the plot. If I can out-wit him, I shall be happy at last. [Exit.

Scene OLDCASTLE'S *House.*

Enter OLDCASTLE, *and* MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

A mortal sin!

OLDCASTLE.

Yes, a mortal sin! you are unexperienced in these matters. It is a sin, child, to accept of presents from men, twees, fans, and Brussels lace. Brussels lace has done as much mischief as the forbidden fruit.---I wish I had bred her up a Quaker. (*aside*) Mind my words: to indulge wanton young men in liberties with your person; to let 'em fold you round the waist, play with your neck, and print lascivious kisses on your lips, is the sure road to destruction.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but I don't believe that---and a pity it should, for, (*smiling at him*) it is very agreeable. I am sure I like it better than questions and commands, or hide and go seek, either.

OLDCASTLE.

I tell you they are all abominable things till the marriage-ceremony is performed,

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

And is it allowed then?

OLDCASTLE.

Then, and then only, Mary Ann.

MARY-ANN. (*smiling*)

By goles, I am glad to hear that, and so marry me as soon as you will.

OLDCASTLE.

Hold, beware, Mary Ann. I marry you for myself only: you must despise and detest all others.

MARY-ANN.

I wish you would let me go and feed my birds.

OLDCASTLE.

Compose your thoughts, I say. Marriage is an holy institution, and exacts rigorous duties on the part of the wife. You must love, honour, and obey your husband. Be upon your guard; the enemy of woman-kind is for ever prowling about in quest of prey, always ready to seduce, to murder, and devour, and swallow up in the jaws of ruin every frail young creature that comes in his way.

MARY-ANN. (*bursts into tears*)

But they shan't swallow me up, so they shan't.

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! ay! this will do her good. Come, come, dry up your tears.

MARY-

MARY-ANN. (*sobbing*)

I did not do any thing to be devoured in the jaws of ruin, so I did not.

OLDCASTLE.

No, no; all will be well. 'Tis for your good I speak. So, so, so; have done crying. There—— make me a curtesy. Mighty well! be a good girl.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but they shan't murder, and devour me, for there are folks enough in London all hours of the day to assist a body; and if he comes in the night, I can call the watch, so I can.

OLDCASTLE.

I am pleased with her simplicity. This young profligate that you have let into my house, if he should come under your window again—That's right. I have a thought: you shall fling him out all his presents, you shall write him a letter, and tell him what a monster he is. Come, take that chair, sit down, take that pen, and write as I dictate to you.

MARY-ANN. (*sitting down.*)

Law! I does not understand all this.

OLDCASTLE. (*walking about*)

Write as I dictate. Come, begin. Mr. Brumpton. (*goes to the side of the scene*) Peter, bring me up a candle.

MARY-ANN.

" Dear Mr. Brumpton!

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Mr. Brumpton, and no more.

MARY-ANN. (*smiling aside*)

Very well.

OLDCASTLE. (*walking about*)

You are a vile man, and your visits I now see sprung from a bad design.

MARY-ANN. (*aside*)

Ah! I don't like those words. By goles (*smiling as his back is turned*) I know what I'll do—(*stifling a laugh*) I have writ it.

OLDCASTLE.

To ruin my future happiness——

MARY-ANN.

Happiness. (*writes*)

OLDCASTLE.

Your intention is base, and unworthy of a gentleman.

MARY-ANN.

Very well. (*writes*)

OLDCASTLE.

You are odious in your person; detestable in your morals, and the scorn of all our sex. Have you writ it?

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Stay, stay, all our sex. (*writes*)

OLDCASTLE.

I am in love with Mr. Biddulph.

MARY-ANN.

Who?

OLDCASTLE.

Write as I bid you. I am in love with Mr. Biddulph, a worthy good gentleman; and out of his hands, it never shall be in your power to seduce me.

MARY-ANN. (*smiling*)

Very well.

OLDCASTLE.

Therefore let me never see you any more—Mary Ann Richley.

MARY-ANN. (*writes*)

Mary Ann Richley.

OLDCASTLE.

Now let me read it.

MARY-ANN.

No, no; stay, stay a moment: not quite done.

Enter

Enter PETER. *(with a candle)*

PETER.

Here be the candle, master. The gentleman is walking under the window now.

OLDCASTLE.

Is he? Make haste, fold up the letter; let me do it; let me do it. Make haste; come, come, dispatch, he'll be gone, else. You shall throw it to him now, and all his presents. Come, come, make haste.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! I am ready. I like this of all things.

[Exeunt in a violent hurry.]

Scene the Street.

Enter BELFORD, and LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

Once more well met, Sir. You can write I fancy, can't you?

BELFORD.

The drift of that question, Sir?

LOVIBOND.

I fancy you know this little bauble. *(shewing a box)* You don't know it to be sure, no, nor the letter in the inside. Here take it back. I charge nothing

thing for the postage. You have it unopened, in *statu quo*. (*opens the box*) Look ye here; ha!—you have it in good order, and well conditioned as it came. Ha! ha!—Harriet would not read a word of it: she had no curiosity about it.

BELFORD.

But I have. (*aside, and taking the letter, opens it*) Heavens blefs her wit. (*aside, and reads*)

LOVIBOND.

Ay! you know the hand-writing. Take notice you broke the seal yourself. None of us read a word of it. We return it unopened, to make the affront the deeper.

BELFORD.

I believe you, Sir. I see you never read a word of it.

LOVIBOND.

Not a syllable: her pride would not suffer it.

BELFORD.

Well, since it is come to this, being out of humour will avail nothing—Ha! ha! I can't help laughing.

LOVIBOND.

That's pleasant of you. Ha! ha! ha!

BELFORD.

Yes, very pleasant. Ha! ha! ha!

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

See what your intrigues are come to !

BELFORD.

Yes, Sir, you have brought 'em to a fine pass.

LOVIBOND.

Ay ! you see I am not to be tricked.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

OLDCASTLE.

Mr. Lovibond, I am wild with joy.

LOVIBOND.

And so am I.

BELFORD.

Who is that old fellow? (*aside, and reads his letter*)

OLDCASTLE.

I have managed matters charmingly. Who is that spark ?

LOVIBOND.

You need not be shy of him. Mr. Old——

OLDCASTLE.

Call me Biddulph. (*aside*)

Lo

LOVIBOND.

Well ! I fancy you will toss no more letters in at the window.

BELFORD.

No truly, Sir, not I : and I beg you will assure the lady that——

LOVIBOND.

Ay ! let us hear : you need not mind this gentleman. Come, come, let us hear, now brother Old——

OLDCASTLE.

Call me Biddulph. (*aside*)

LOVIBOND.

Ay ! now hear him, Mr. Biddulph.

BELFORD.

I beg the lady's pardon, Sir. I resign myself to her inclinations, and shall obey her commands.

LOVIBOND.

Very well.

BELFORD.

You are too powerful a rival, and since it is so, you will be pleased to tell her I most heartily approve of the choice she has made.

LOVIBOND.

Do you hear that ? (*to* OLDCASTLE.)

BEL-

BELFORD.

Her superior sense shines forth in every action of her life, and, Sir, I have only to say that I shall never give her cause to complain again. You will report me to the lady, and, Sir, I take my leave. [*Exit.*]

LOVIBOND.

There, there, you see what a happy man I am.

OLDCASTLE.

Well, and now let me tell you——

LOVIBOND.

I can't stay to hear: I am in the elements with joy. Brother Oldcastle, your servant. [*Exit.*]

OLDCASTLE.

But, brother Lovibond, let me tell you—an envious man, he can't bear his neighbours happiness. I must follow him and tell him all. [*Exit.*]

Enter BRISK.

BRISK.

My dear good-nature hold you your tongue! you plead in vain: not a step will I budge. I am rock, and will be made a dupe no more. Well said my just resentment: we know the world now, and will be led a devil's dance no longer. Bravo Brisk, now you are free, and your own man again. Service is a very unthankful office, and for the mere honour of——Pshaw! pox! now my honour must be heard.

VOL. IV.

Q

What

What will the world say of you, Mr. Brisk, you that have hitherto been the first footman in England, renowned for your parts and your abilities! money is absolutely necessary for your master's affairs: Mr. Oldcastle is his only resource, and you have orders to apply for it directly. But, my dear honour, you know what an empty bubble you are, and how often I have been kicked in your service. The more glory, man; If any body thinks it worth his while to kick you, it's a sign you are rising in the world. Those are the things that will help your fortune, and make an exciseman of you at last! bravo! I kindle at the thought. I must go on; one effort more, Brisk, and then——But how! how to touch the cash!—
 “My Master is in the utmost distress, Sir, and will
 “be for ever obliged to you”——Pshaw! that will never do—I have a stratagem, and if I can but meet with master Oldcastle——ha! as luck will have it—
 courage, Brisk! here he comes.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

BRISK.

Oh! Sir! I am glad I have met you at last. I have sought you thro' the whole town.

OLDCASTLE.

You live with young Brumpton, don't you?

BRISK.

The same, Sir. Such a tide of affairs coming upon him! such an unforeseen accident! poor Sir Theodore, Sir! the good worthy gentleman, on his way from the country——

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

I understood he was in town.

BRISK.

He was coming to town, Sir; we expected him every hour. And now the fatal news is arrived. He was taken suddenly ill; no assistance near; it happened on the road; the poor gentleman expired, and in the most critical moment!

OLDCASTLE.

Carried off in this manner you say, and without having time to be ill!

BRISK.

Yes, Sir; without a single consultation of physicians! It's very hard! It's a pity he was in such a haste to die. But good sometimes comes of evil they say. The news has wrought a wonderful change in my young master. Sir Theodore had made a match for him in the country; a great match indeed!

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! I heard of it.

BRISK.

And yet the son, perverse and obstinate, was in love here in town; that is, he fancied he was, with an insignificant hussy, and was determined to marry her, in opposition to his poor father.

Q²

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

I have heard of that too.

BRISK.

But he is now shocked to find that he has been a monster of disobedience, and he gives up all thought of this town lady.

OLDCASTLE.

That's right: the good young man!

BRISK.

He renounces her for ever, Sir, and is resolved to go off immediately for the country, and marry no woman in the world but the person designed for him by his father.

OLDCASTLE.

The good young man! this is the best news I ever heard in my life. (*aside*) The good young man!

BRISK.

But then his intention of going out of town, I fear, may be frustrated.

OLDCASTLE.

As how! that must not be.

BRISK.

Why we were kept a little bare of cash latterly, just to reduce him to a sense of his duty: and now he wants wherewithal to discharge some little bills, before we set out for the country.

OLD.

OLDCASTLE.

Why, I am indebted to Sir Theodore's estate. The intentions of the young man must not be frustrated.

BRISK.

Heaven forbid!

OLDCASTLE.

Here, I have in a purse here——Ha! ha! I shall get rid of a plague and a torment (*aside*)——I can let him have a couple of hundreds——(*holds out the purse to him*)

BRISK.

Ah! Sir! if you will be so generous.

OLDCASTLE.

Here, here; take it to him. and tell him he can't go out of town too soon.

BRISK.

I shall be sure to tell him Sir.

[Exit.

OLDCASTLE.

A good journey to him, say I. How! is not that he?

Enter BRUMPTON. (*humming a tune*)

OLDCASTLE.

Well, Mr. Brumpton—the young rogue, nothing affects him. Now will he tell me that he is going back into the country.

Q 3

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Oh!—I longed to see you. The old curmudgeon is returned from the country.

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! let us hear.

BRUMPTON.

The servants have changed their tone, and the door is shut in my face.

OLDCASTLE.

I can't help laughing. Ha! ha! this Mr. Bid-dulph knows what he is about, I fancy.

BRUMPTON.

Po! the fellow is fitter to have the funeral service read over him than the marriage ceremony. He made her come to the balcony,---

OLDCASTLE.

Well! how was that?

BRUMPTON.

He muffled himself up behind the curtain: She threw me out some trinkets, I had given her, But, my dear friend, she flung a letter with 'em.

OLDCASTLE.

I long to hear about that.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

The contents of it amazed me.

OLDCASTLE.

I dare say : she told you her mind, I reckon.

BRUMPTON.

Most freely, most openly. Old Nostrodamus is outwitted. For, look you here, here in her own fair hand—ten thousand blessings on her (*kisses the letter*) Here, Sir, the genuine dictates of her heart.

OLDCASTLE.

He is mad, sure! let me hear it.

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

“ Dear Mr. Brumpton, you are a charming man,
“ and your civilities, I am sure, sprung from an honest
“ design, for my future happiness.

OLDCASTLE.

In the name of wonder, what is all this ! (*aside*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

“ Your intentions are generous and worthy of a
“ gentleman.

OLDCASTLE.

The little forcerefs ! (*aside*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

“ You are handsome in your person, and your
“ manners also ; and the admiration of all our sex.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the Jezebel! (*aside*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

"I hate Mr. Biddulph, an odious old wretch;
"and——"

OLDCASTLE.

The vile harlotry! (*aside*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

"And out of my guardian's hands, it is in your
"power to relieve me. Yours indeed, and indeed,
"until death us do part—Mary Ann Richley."

OLDCASTLE.

She has reversed every word of it!

BRUMPTON.

There's an adventure! ha! ha! ha;——Is not she
a charming girl? You don't partake of my joy.

OLDCASTLE.

Partake of your joy—I—I—I—yes.

[*looking un-easy*]

BRUMPTON.

What a way old Biddulph will be in!

OLDCASTLE.

Why, I must say I feel for him.

BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

Feel for him, a base betrayer of his trust! who could offer his withered, superannuated love to the sweetest girl, and with the winter of old age nip so much beauty in its bud! January and May joined together! does not that make you laugh?

OLDCASTLE.

I am afraid of laughing, tho' I love it of all things. It sets me a coughing. Well! but trouble may come of all this.

BRUMPTON.

Never be uneasy. An't you amazed at my success?

OLDCASTLE.

I am indeed. I never was so confounded in all my days (*aside*) I wish as heartily as a minister of state that there was not such a thing as pen, ink, and paper in the kingdom. (*aside*)

BRUMPTON.

What's the matter with you?

OLDCASTLE.

A megrim has suddenly taken me. Take care what you do. I thought you were going into the country. I have let your man Brisk have two hundred for your use.

BRUMPTON.

Have you? Nobly done! that will help me to
carry

carry her off. You have furnished me with the sinews of war.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the vile baggage! I am undone; I am ruined. I must run home directly. [*Exit.*]

BRUMPTON.

What's the matter with the old curmudgeon?

Enter BELFORD.

BRUMPTON.

Belford, let me embrace you. I tread in air.
(*embracing him.*)

BELFORD.

My dear Brumpton, I too am wild with joy. I am out of my senses—(*walks about humming a tune*)

BRUMPTON. (*hums a different tune*)

Oh! such an unexpected, transporting, ravishing event!

BELFORD.

Such a surprize, above all romance!

BRUMPTON.

Oh! Belford, I am the happiest rogue.

BELFORD.

Such unutterable blifs, my dear boy——

BRUMP.

BRUMPTON,

Her wit is equal so her beauty.

BELFORD.

The greatest stroke of invention,—Ha! ha!

BRUMPTON,

Such a sweet epistle!

BELFORD.

So divine a letter! and the old fellow brought it himself.

BRUMPTON,

No, no; you mistake; she flung it out of the window.

BELFORD.

Po!—I tell you he was the bearer of it himself.

BRUMPTON.

You are quite wrong; she was in the balcony, and——

BELFORD.

Pshaw! give me leave to know. Did not I see him?

BRUMPTON.

There was no seeing him distinctly. He was skulking behind the curtain, and then she threw the letter

letter down to me. The idol of my heart!—the lovely Mary Ann!

BELFORD.

Mary-Ann! 'fdeath! I was telling you how my sweet godeefs contrived to fend me a letter by her very guardian.

BRUMPTON.

I did not hear a syllable of that matter, I was telling you —

BELFORD.

Then I'll tell you how it was.

BRUMPTON.

No—no—hear the story of my happiness.

BELFORD.

Nay, nay; mine is the most surprizing.

BRUMPTON.

Look ye here, my boy (*shewing a letter*) the work of her own fingers!

BELFORD.

There, there—(*shewing his letter*) more eloquence than in all Cicero.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

Dear Mr. Brumpton, you are a sweet man,
and your civilities——

BELFORD. (*reads*)

You will be surprized at this letter; and more
so at the manner of conveying it.

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

The admiration of all our sex.

BELFORD. (*reads*)

But I must hazard all, or fall a sacrifice to
the avarice of my guardian.

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

And out of his hands it is in your power to
relieve me.

BELFORD. (*reads*)

I love you, Mr. Belford; will you despise me
for telling you so? I hope not.

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

Yours indeed, and indeed, until death us do
part, Mary-Ann Richley.

BELFORD. (*reads*)

Contrive some means for my escape, and
heaven and earth combined shall not keep you
from me—the disconsolate Harriet.

[*Exeunt together.*]

(*Each interrupting the other, and reading at the same time very eagerly.*)

SCENE

SCENE OLDCASTLE'S *House.*

Enter PETER *and* BRIDGET.

PETER.

It's pure lucky, Bridget, he did not find the gentleman in the closet.

BRIDGET.

He lay close all the time like a mouse in a cheese, and master walked about the room, and gnawed his lip, and gnashed his teeth, and gave the table a hugeous rap with his stick, and fetched a deep groan, and did not say so much as one word, and then led Miss Mary Ann out of the room.

PETER.

I'll tell you what, Bridget, it's all owing to his finding out the young gentleman's visits here to Miss Mary Ann.

BRIDGET.

Yes, yes; it stands to reason how it must be that. Dear me! he locks poor Miss Mary-Ann up here for all the world like a horse in a pound, and I can't tell why or by reason whereof, not I.

PETER.

I'll tell you, Bridget. I understands these matters. He locks her up do you see, because as why he is troubled with jealousy.

BRID-

BRIDGET.

What is jealousy pray, Pèter?

PETER.

Dear heart, you are such another. Jealousy, you may know, won't let a body sleep. It's for all the world like so many rats behind the wainscot. I'll tell you now, by way of likeness. The gentleman you know gaved you a guinea. Now putting case, any body was to come for to take away your guinea, do you see, that would put you in a passion, would not it?

BRIDGET.

Oh! I understands it now.

PETER.

It's as like it as any thing. For see but here: Miss Mary-Ann is his guinea; and you know when a body wants to be fingering another man's money, what does he do then?—Why he brings you down to sizes an whole heap of London counsel, to quarrel about it, and abuse one another, and be together by the ears for ever so many hours.

BRIDGET.

I remember all that, and it's as like Miss Mary-Ann as it can stare. But then I want to know why does not every body make the same fufs, and lock his wife up too?

PETER.

Po! you fool! that's becaufe every body does not love his wife as well as a guinea.

BRID.

BRIDGET.

Then I understands the whole git of it. But law look ye there!

PETER.

It's master, as sure as a gun. How he looks, Bridget! let us get out of his way. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter OLDCASTLE.

OLDCASTLE.

What a trick she has played me! Oh! the little treacherous——

Enter MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

Law! you look so strange, you are enough to frighten a body.

OLDCASTLE.

Mary-Ann, I have seen Mr. Brumpton.

MARY-ANN.

Have you? (*laughs aside*)

OLDCASTLE.

He was wonderfully pleased with your letter.

MARY-ANN. (*smiling aside*)

By goles, I know why.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

What did you say to him?

MARY-ANN.

Say to him! (*turns away, and smiles*)

OLDCASTLE.

Did you write what I bid you?

MARY-ANN. (*laughing*)

Altered it a little bit!

OLDCASTLE.

A good deal, I fancy.

MARY-ANN. (*laughs*)

By gingo, I played you that trick.

OLDCASTLE.

And was not it base to deceive me?

MARY-ANN.

I could not find it in my heart to say the things you wanted me to write.

OLDCASTLE.

And don't you consider what a crime it is?

MARY-ANN.

It was only to play upon you.

OLDCASTLE.

Such a wicked letter, Mary Ann!

MARY-ANN.

It was you shewed me the way. How should I have thought of such a thing?

OLDCASTLE.

That stings, that galls—(*aside*) But there are women, Mary Ann, who can write without being bid.

MARY-ANN.

What, all out of their own heads!

OLDCASTLE.

Even so.

MARY-ANN:

And what do they write?

OLDCASTLE.

They make assignations; inform their gallants, when their husbands are to be from home; they fix the time for amorous meetings, at routs and drums——

MARY-ANN.

Routs and drums! what be they?

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Wicked assemblies!—where women lose more than they can pay, and then pawn their persons, together with the husband's honour, and so infamously pay off the debts they have contracted.

MARY-ANN. (*smiling*)

That's comical enough.

OLDCASTLE.

And then they fly wild about this town; to the seducing gaieties of Vaux-hall and Ranelagh.

MARY-ANN.

Law! I never heard of they.

OLDCASTLE.

Ranelagh, child, is a wicked round of sin, intrigue, and clandestine love; where crowds gather together, stealing glances, exchanging letters, negotiating riotous pleasures. Vaux-hall is a very Paradise of forbidden fruits, where shady walks exclude the conscious day, and every blandishment of sense, musick, wine, and opportunity, conspire to waken the voluptuous passions.

MARY-ANN. (*smiling*)

And must not Mary-Ann see those places?

OLDCASTLE.

No, never, never, Mary Ann. Here, here is the marriage-act for you to read. All young girls ought to have it by heart. This will teach you how

unnatural it is to fall in love without the consent of King, Lords, and Commons!

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but I can't stay for their leave. They are too great folks for me to think of!

OLDCASTLE.

Take it up-stairs with you. It is a very edifying tract!

MARY-ANN.

Very well, I'll go—(*as she is going*) I'll go and try if I can't write a letter out of my own head.

[*Exit.*]

OLDCASTLE.

When she has read the marriage act, she will have a proper sense of her duty. So, Peter!—so, Bridget!—walk in.

Enter PETER and BRIDGET.

OLDCASTLE.

Now if I can tutor these to my mind. (*aside*)

BRIDGET.

For the love of mercy, Sir.

PETER.

I'll never do so any more, master.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Come hither both. I am not angry: you are no strangers to the affection I bear Mary-Ann.

BRIDGET.

No, that's for sure: you love her as well as you do a guinea.

OLDCASTLE.

How now, Malapert!

BRIDGET.

I am sure Peter said so.

PETER.

No, not I, for the varfal world!

OLDCASTLE.

What's the matter, Numskulls? Listen to me. Watch my house well; and be sure you never let any powdered coxcombs put a foot over the threshold of my door.

BRIDGET.

Yes, Sir!

PETER.

No, Sir!

OLDCASTLE.

But the wily arts of young men! Think of a gay embroidered fop coming to you with a piteous look

look: "I languish for your mistress; I die in her absence; let me but see her, or else I have one foot in my grave already."

PETER.

Be gone about your business, fellow, says I. This is no place for you. My young mistress desires no such trumpery.

OLDCASTLE.

Mighty well, Peter, it can't be better. But you, Mrs. Bridget, will take some compassion upon a poor dying swain.

BRIDGET.

Go farther a field, and set up the sign of the Horns somewhere else, do: no admittance for you here.

OLDCASTLE.

Charming, Bridget, charming! you do it wonderfully. But then, says he "I'll lie down in the street, and there breathe my last."

PETER.

And then I run up to the garret-window, and souce a bucket of water on his head.

OLDCASTLE.

Excellent! excellent! it will cool his passion for him. Have a bucket of water always ready. Ha! ha! I should laugh to see him streaming like a river-god in the street. I am delighted with you both. But then he comes with his damned bewitching gold. Here, Peter, to drink my health: here Mrs. Bridget, to buy you some tea.

PETER.

PETER.

We want none of your drofs.

BRIDGET.

No, not we. (*pushing Oldcastle*)

PETER.

Go about your business, I say.

BRIDGET.

Money is the root of all evil.

*Both
shoving him.*

OLDCASTLE.

As I could wish. That's right; never spare me.
But here, says he, here's the money for you.
[*holding out money.*]

PETER.

I humbly thank your honour. (*takes it.*)

OLDCASTLE.

Villain! traitor! (*strikes him*) Is this your virtue at last?

PETER.

Law! what's the matter? Was not I to take it?

OLDCASTLE.

What have I been labouring all this time?

PETER.

But you did not shew the money at first. I could
R 4 have

have refused it ever so long, if I had not seen the colour of it.

OLDCASTLE.

The way of the world! but you are never to take it. Money is the ruin of the world. It declares war, it patches up a peace, it makes lawyers speak, it makes some folks hold their tongues. Go, and think of all this.

BRIDGET *and* PETER. (*going in an hurry*)
Yes, Sir!

OLDCASTLE.

And remember you have no business with money,
—Come, and shut the street-door after me.

BOTH.

Yes, Sir.

OLDCASTLE.

Be sure you never touch a shilling. This Mr. Brumpton will be the death of me. [*Exeunt.*]

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T the T H I R D.

S C E N E *the Street.*

Enter OLDCASTLE *and* LOVIBOND.

OLDCASTLE.

BROTHER Lovibond! I go on as I could wish:
my family is all as exact as clock-work.

LOVIBOND.

I am glad of it, for the last time I met you——

OLDCASTLE.

Ay, there was something amiss; but now, I am
completely happy.

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

My dear old friend, I am glad I have met you.
Oh! such plague! such vexation!

OLDCASTLE.

Mind him, brother Lovibond: you'll see what
order my family is in. (*aside*)

BRUMPTON.

I was at the house but a little while since, and——

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

And no admittance?

BRUMPTON.

Oh! the vilest adventure!

OLDCASTLE.

A bucket of water upon your head, I reckon?

BRUMPTON.

Not so bad as that. I got over the garden wall, and——the adventure is whimsical too——the servants immediately conducted me up stairs,

OLDCASTLE.

Conducted you up stairs!

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha!——mind him, brother Biddul——

OLDCASTLE. (*aside to Lovibond*)

Call me Oldcastle.

BRUMPTON.

But, pox take it! my usual good fortune failed me. I was not in the room two minutes when old Stiff-rump came tottering up: no way for a retreat. I was obliged to skulk in a dark nook, where I was almost stifled. In he came, and the lovely angel immediately accosted him in such a tone of simplicity!

LOVIBOND.

Simplicity! ay, ay; let us hear.

BRUMP.

BRUMPTON.

The curmudgeon did not utter a syllable: he walked about the room, fetched a deep groan, banged the table with his cane, took her by the arm, and led her away with him.

LOVIBOND.

A narrow escape, brother Biddulph.

OLDCASTLE.

Call me Oldcastle, I say. (*aside*)

LOVIBOND.

Simplicity is an admirable preservative of young girls. Well, young gentleman, and how did all this end?

BRUMPTON.

His back was no sooner turned, than I stole down stairs, tipped the servant a couple of guineas, and so got clear off.

LOVIBOND.

The old gentleman is going on delightfully. His family is all like clock-work! Brother Biddulph, your's. [*Exit.*]

BRUMPTON.

Biddulph! what are you Mr. Biddulph all this time?

OLDCASTLE.

You see what plague and vexation you was bringing upon your old friend.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

My dear Sir, why did not you tell me at first? If I had known that I was all this time trespassing upon your ground——

OLDCASTLE.

You see what a scene of iniquity you have been engaged in! But since you perceive your error, I am pacified. I'll tell you; you shall come and explain your mistake to Mary-Ann this moment.

BRUMPTON.

With the utmost pleasure, Sir, and wishing her all happiness, I will bid her farewell for ever.

OLDCASTLE.

That will be right. You shall tell her that you repent, that you now renounce all wicked projects, and are convinced it would be the ruin of her to marry you.

BRUMPTON.

Lead the way, Sir; I am ready to obey your commands.

OLDCASTLE.

Very well! enough said. (*going*)

BRUMPTON.

One dear interview!—Bravo! Brumpton! you're in luck. (*aside*)

OLDCASTLE. (*turning about*)

What do you say?

BRUMP.

BRUMPTON.

Only that I am glad of this discovery.

OLDCASTLE.

Very well ; come along.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE *the House.*

Enter MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

By goles this is pure. I saw him at the window : he is bringing him to see me. I have writ another letter since he has taught me that trick himself ; and now I'll give it him if I can.

Enter OLDCASTLE *and* BRUMPTON.

OLDCASTLE.

Mary-Ann, I have brought the gentleman with me. He comes to ask your pardon, and to tell you that he was going to be the ruin of you. Tell it to her yourself, Mr. Brumpton.

MARY-ANN.

I am fure I forgive him with all my heart, so I do.

OLDCASTLE.

Speak to her, Mr. Brumpton, speak to her.

BRUMPTON.

Madam, I did not know what liberties I was taking with my friend.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

You had a mind to ruin her, say so without mincing it.

BRUMPTON.

I must now renounce all farther pretensions; since to adore you any longer would be a violation of friendship, and an injury to this worthy gentleman, who has been an intimate with my father for fifty years.

OLDCASTLE.

You may pass that by.

BRUMPTON.

So that I most humbly beg your pardon.

OLDCASTLE.

Go on, go on—(*he is seized with a fit of coughing*)

BRUMPTON. (*while Oldcastle coughs*)

And though I shall never efface your loved idea from my mind—(*he kisses his hand to her*)

MARY-ANN. (*she smiles*)

You have my pardon: I told you so already.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! Lord! Lord! (*recovering himself*) Well, have you told her you have done with her for ever?

BRUMPTON.

Yes, I have got so far.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Very well! Now, Mary-Ann, on your part, let him know your mind.

MARY-ANN.

Must I say all out of my own head?

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! ay! tell him all. I wish brother Lovibond was witness to this! (*aside*)

MARY-ANN.

I am very glad you came to speak to me, Sir, and I understand you very well. (*smiles to him*)

OLDCASTLE.

But a little more at large: tell him whom you chuse for an husband.

MARY-ANN.

Why, here are two lovers, for whom I have very different sentiments. I love one of them,---(*frowning at Oldcastle*) and (*smiling at Brumpton*) I hate the other. The company of one is always agreeable, (*to Oldcastle sullenly*) and (*smiling at Brumpton*) I don't care if I never see the other's face. I should like to be married to one of them, (*to Oldcastle*) and (*smiling at Brumpton*) I had as soon be gibbeted, as be married to the other. But my own Mr. Oldcastle ---(*toys and plays with him, then turning to Brumpton*) I love you of all things.

OLDCASTLE.

You have won my heart.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

But do you forgive I every thing now? Ah! you don't love me. (*sings "Go, naughty man," and reaches a letter to Brumpton*)

OLDCASTLE.

I do; in troth I do. Mr. Brumpton, you see I have not suggested a word: all the dictates of her own heart.

MARY-ANN. (*smiling to Brumpton*)

All from the very bottom of my heart!

BRUMPTON.

Since I understand you, Ma'am, I shall remove the hated object from your sight.

MARY-ANN.

The sooner the better.

(*then turns and plays with Oldcastle*)

BRUMPTON.

Mr. Oldcastle, I have the honour, Sir, to wish you all happiness. I fly this moment to put your commands in execution, Ma'am. (*going*)

MARY-ANN.

You can't go about it too fast.

BRUMPTON.

You may rely upon my honour.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

And don't let me be unhappy any more.

BRUMPTON.

You may depend upon me.

OLDCASTLE.

So, so; now I'll attend you down stairs. Po! no ceremony. You have made me happy, Mr. Brumpton. You have made Mary-Ann happy. Come I'll let you out, Mr. Brumpton. *[Exit.]*

BRUMPTON. *(kissing his hand to Mary Ann)*

I attend you, Sir. *[Exit.]*

MARY ANN.

By goles, he has taught me a little wit himself; and if Mr. Brumpton follows my directions, I shall be pure and happy at last.

SCENE LOVIBOND'S HOUSE.

Enter HARRIET *and* BELLFORD.

HARRIET.

I don't know what to say, Mr. Bellford; my heart begins to fail.

BELLFORD.

But after surmounting every difficulty, now in this last stage of the business to let your spirits sink, would be such a falling off from the character you have supported this day! a character that surpasses

all the heroines in romance, both for spirit and contrivance.

HARRIET.

The difficulties I had to encounter rouzed my spirits for a while, just as fits give us for the time more than our natural strength: but now the conflict's over, my resolution staggers, and I am at full leisure to feel the weakness of my condition. I can't go through it, Mr. Bellford, I can't indeed.

BELFORD.

Nay, summon up your resolution. Our mutual vows, the happiness that waits us, every motive, a thousand things conspire, and call for all the constancy you are mistress of.

HARRIET.

But then to break through all the proprieties of conduct; all the decencies which my sex requires!

BELFORD.

In a case like your's, the means are just which save you from destruction.

HARRIET. (*bears Lovibond coming*)

Deliver me! what shall I do? Undone! detected!

BELFORD.

This is the consequence of delaying too long.

HARRIET.

Run into this room; make haste; dispatch, (*shuts him*

him in) and to make safe work—(*puts the key in her pocket*)

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

Harriet, I am never happy but in your company. The minutes move with leaden feet, when I am not in your presence.

HARRIET.

And yet, you ill-natured man! you can contrive to be out more than half the day.

LOVIBOND.

Chide me not; you'll break my heart if you do. every frown on that face is a death warrant, and every smile is benefit of clergy. Come, come, brighten up into happiness and love:

HARRIET.

You know your power over me. You can do what you please with your own Harriet!

LOVIBOND.

Can I?

HARRIET.

Where have you been all this time?

LOVIBOND.

I have been——but you look pale; what is the matter?

HARRIET.

Occasioned by fretting at your absence. And that hideous man keeps me in a constant alarm.

LOVIBOND.

Don't waste a thought on him. He will trouble you no more. Tho', to do him justice, I believe his intentions were honourable. Poor devil! ha! I fancy he loves you dearly. Well! but poor brother Oldcastle! your sister has so bamboozled him.

HARRIET.

My sister!

LOVIBOND.

She has admitted a young gentleman to visit her.

HARRIET.

She could not be so wicked!

LOVIBOND.

The girl has not erred so much from an evil disposition, as from ignorance. One Mr. Brumton—a wild, fiery young spark—he was in the very house with her, and she hid him in the closet.

HARRIET.

In the closet! well! after that, I will never own her for my sister! the wicked girl! I am glad I have not visited her.

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! ha! poor man! he never suspected any thing

thing. Had it been my case, I should have smoked it in a moment.

HARRIET.

Without doubt! there is no imposing upon you.

LOVIBOND.

Oh! no, no such thing: the eye of an eagle for a plot! But come; it begins to grow late. Come, let me hand you to your chamber, and then I'll lock you in safe from all harm till morning.

HARRIET.

Heavens! what shall I do now? (*aside*) Hush let me say a word to you first. Don't speak loud. My sister is indeed much worse than you can conceive. I wish you would step and bring Mr. Oldcastle hither directly.

LOVIBOND.

Now! what occasion can there be——

HARRIET.

She loves that Mr. Brumpton to distraction, and has actually made her escape, to follow the vile man.

LOVIBOND.

Made her escape!

HARRIET.

She is in that room now. I have locked her in. Such wicked schemes as she has in her head! She has told me all, and intends to marry this Mr.

278 THE SCHOOL FOR GUARDIANS.

Brumpton : she has found out that she is of age, and says she will be made a fool of no longer ! there is a spirit for you !

LOVIBOND.

A spirit indeed !

HARRIET.

But I have secured her, to prevent the disgrace.

LOVIBOND.

That was considerate of you. Let me go and talk to the young vixen.

HARRIET.

No, no ; that will spoil all. I have pretended to connive at all this ; but the most prudent step,—I have learned all my prudence, you know, from you——

LOVIBOND.

An apt scholar you have been !

HARRIET.

You are very good : but there is no time to be lost. I would have you bring Mr. Oldcastle here directly, that he may find her in the very fact.

LOVIBOND.

Very good ! and then I shall be able to do the poor man a service, and make a jest of him in to the bargain. Keep her safe ; don't let her out ; this will so torment him ! ha ! ha !

[Exit.

HAR-

HARRIET.

I am glad my sister has found a lover, and I hope she'll marry him with all my heart. Is he gone? (*listens at the door.*) Ay! I hear him lock the street-door after him. And now I'll venture to unlock this door.

Enter BELFORD.

BELFORD.

Thou charming contriver!

HARRIET.

Oh! this new danger has given fresh vigour to my spirits.

BELFORD.

And now, my angel, we'll make sure of our happiness. Come, trust yourself to my care.

HARRIET.

And yet——

BELFORD.

Nay,—no more doubts: Our passage to the next house is without difficulty, and then liberty is ours.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E *the Street.*

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

I never was better pleased in all my life. I burn
S 4 with

with impatience to see him. Ha! ha! I shall never be able to walk fast enough. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter OLDCASTLE.

LOVIBOND.

Well met! I wanted to see you.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! I am now the happiest man on earth. My troubles with young Brumpton are all at an end, and Mary Ann is safe at home,

LOVIBOND:

Ay! as he thinks poor man! ha! ha! (*aside*)

OLDCASTLE.

You may laugh, but I shall like to see your plan succeed as well. What a dupe you will prove at last!

LOVIBOND.

What a dupe you are now! the bird is flown, man; Mary Ann has eloped.

OLDCASTLE.

Ha! ha! ha! you make me laugh,

LOVIBOND.

How secure he is! ha! ha! he little dreams—I tell you she is gone.

OLDCASTLE.

Allways absurd! (*going out*)

LOVI-

LOVIBOND. (*following him.*)

You are ruined, I tell you.

OLDCASTLE.

Ha ! ha !——do you think I don't know better ?

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter HARRIET and BELFORD.

BELFORD.

Don't alarm yourself, my angel : This is my
house. [*knocks at the door.*]

HARRIET.

Oh ! I shall certainly faint.

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

My dear Belford !

HARRIET.

Heavens ! what's the matter ?

BRUMPTON.

Don't be frightened, Ma'am.

BELFORD.

No : this is a friend of mine. Well ! Brumpton,
the business !

BRUMPTON.

My dearest Belford, this is the most critical mo-
ment

ment of my life. I have bribed the servants; carried her off; she is mine; mine for ever. Will you give me a room in your house for this one night?

BELFORD.

Why this ceremony? you know you may command in my house.

Re-enter OLDCASTLE and LOVIBOND.

OLDCASTLE.

What noise is that?

LOVIBOND.

That's Brumpton, I know his voice.

HARRIET.

I am frightened to death.

BRUMPTON.

The door opens, walk in ma'am, walk in.

(Harriet goes in.)

OLDCASTLE.

Hush! Let us hear him.

BRUMPTON.

I am wild with love, with rapture, and success! I have carried her fairly off, in triumph, my dear boy! She was locked up in a closet, but I broke open the door.

BEL-

BELFORD.

I give you joy. But my own happiness calls.
Bring the lady as soon as you will, [Exit.

BRUMPTON.

A thousand thanks, my dear Bellford, Victoria!
the prize is mine. [Exit.

LOVIBOND.

Are you convinced now?

OLDCASTLE.

I am thunderstruck. Robbery! Murder! I'll
break open the door. Watchman, call a justice of
peace. I'll alarm the world! (*raps at the door*)
Robbery! shipwreck! destruction! ruin!

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! he feels it now, and I am not sorry for
him.

OLDCASTLE.

I am mad, I shall go distracted; I shall end my
days in Bedlam. (*Enter a servant.*) I would fain
speak a word here in the house.

SERVANT.

Sir, my master is somewhat busy, and—

OLDCASTLE.

I am plundered. I must go in. Oh! villain!
villain! (*rushes in*)

LOVI-

LOVIBOND.

Ha ! ha ! Now will he see which can train up a young girl best. [Exit.

SCENE *an Apartment in BELFORD's House.*

Enter BELFORD.

BELFORD. (*listens at the door*)

Ay ! I hear his voice. How could my booby let him in ? But I have lodged her safe, and this sword shall maintain possession.

Enter OLDCASTLE and LOVIBOND.

OLDCASTLE.

Where is she ? Where is the unfortunate ? Restore her directly, restore her to her two guardians. We come to demand her of you.

LOVIBOND.

Yes, we demand her, Sir.

BELFORD.

My house is my castle, gentlemen, and nobody must offer violence here.

OLDCASTLE.

I'll search your house. I claim her, I demand her ; and I will have her.

LOVIBOND.

We are her guardians, Sir, both her guardians.

BEL-

BELFORD.

Mr. Lovibond, you are her guardian; and what then, Sir? Both of ye scandalous betrayers of your trust! I know it all; each circumstance. You would impose upon her tender years, that you may infamously plunder that property which was confided to your care!

LOVIBOND.

There is a cloud gathering!—We shall both be brought to a strict account. I had better make up this matter, that I may enjoy my own Harriet in security. Better make the best of a bad bargain. (*aside*) But let me understand you, Mr. Bellford: do you intend to marry her yourself?

BELFORD.

It is my peremptory resolution. Marriage articles, for the purpose of settling her whole fortune upon herself, are now drawing in the next room.

LOVIBOND.

I see what course I must take. If he marries her, I shall live in peace (*aside*)—Mr. Oldcastle, the girl is of full age. Let me say a word in your ear. (*aside to him*)—Consent to the marriage, and get a handsome allowance for the trouble and expence of her education: that word makes me laugh—ha! ha! ha!

OLDCASTLE.

I am distracted; what shall I do? (*aside*)—I thought young Brumpton was to marry her?

BEL-

BELFORD.

No Brumpton on earth shall rob me of her !

LOVIBOND.

Think no more of her : she is not worthy of your regard. Mr. Bellford will behave like a gentleman in matters of account, and——

BELFORD.

Prescribe your terms. I am ready to agree the matter this moment.

OLDCASTLE.

A release for the interest of rents and profits, a cool five thousand for extraordinary trouble.

BELFORD.

Agreed !

LOVIBOND.

Close with him ; close with him directly.

BELFORD.

My lawyer is in the next room ; let him draw up a memorandum between us, and your conditions are granted.

LOVIBOND.

It shall be done. We will both sign : come, don't hesitate. [to Oldcastle.]

OLDCASTLE.

I shall break my heart !

Lovibond.

LOVIBOND.

Po!—no hesitating. Come and finish the business!

OLDCASTLE.

It is a terrible stroke!

LOVIBOND.

Never stand debating. You have made the best of a bad bargain: lose no time. [*Forcing him along.*]

OLDCASTLE.

But, Mr. Bellford—

LOVIBOND.

We must resign her. We must give her up. Come along, man. [*Forces him out.*]

BELFORD.

I attend you, gentlemen. I agree to your proposals.

Enter BRUMPTON *and* MARY-ANN.

BRUMPTON.

This way, my angel: we are safe here.

BELFORD.

Brumpton! I give you joy: I give you joy, Ma'am.

MARY-ANN.

I thank you kindly, Sir.

BRUMF-

BRUMPTON:

And now, Bellford, through the perils of this day——

BELFORD.

Hold, hold! they are not quite over. Here is a deed to be signed: when that is finished, my happiness is then complete. Excuse me for a moment.

[*Exit.*]

BRUMPTON.

Success attend you. Well, Brisk!

Enter BRISK.

BRISK.

I have got every thing clear off, Sir.

BRUMPTON.

I shall reward your service: stay here and take care of this lady, while I dispatch an affair, that admits of no delay.

[*Exit.*]

MARY-ANN.

Law! what a pretty room here is!

BRISK.

Your appearance tells me, that my master has found a treasure.

MARY-ANN.

I am sure I am fortunate in finding him; for I lead such a life; you can't think how dismal!

BRISK.

BRISK.

The scene will now be changed, and the pleasures of life will court you on every side.

Enter OLDCASTLE. (*listening*)

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the little compound of treachery and fraud!

MARY-ANN.

I was kept from morning to night mewed up at home, and he talked such a parcel of bugbears to frighten a body!

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the traitrefs!

MARY-ANN.

And he said if I looked at a sweet smiling young gentleman, that I should be murdered; and devoured and swallowed up.

BRISK.

An old blockhead!

MARY-ANN.

Yes, I thought as much. But I am sure I am obliged to Peter and Bridget for letting me out, and they shall come and live with me, so they shall. Do you know our Peter and Bridget?

OLDCASTLE.

They shall both be hanged.

[*aside.*]

MARY-ANN.

And my old guardian wanted to marry me himself, but—(*laughs*) He talked in such a manner, and said such strange things! (*laughs*) The joke was, he taught me how to write letters, and I should never have thought of such a thing, had he not put me in the head on't. And he is so old, and totters about so; and he calls me his lambkin; and bids me read the marriage act, and a heap of trumpery. An hideous, ugly, old scare crow! La! there he is.

OLDCASTLE. (*coming forward*)

Thou serpent, whom I have warmed and cherished in my bosom! you must sting your benefactor at last, must you? Did not I promise to marry you?

MARY-ANN.

Yes, but, by goles, I thank you for that though.

OLDCASTLE.

Sirrah! villain! get you out of the room. (*Exit Brisk*) And will you desert me for a stranger?

MARY-ANN. (*she laughs*)

He's a sweet man!

OLDCASTLE.

Viper! this is your simplicity, is it? I, who loved you so.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but his love is more agreeable by half.

Enter

Enter LOVIBOND *and* BELLFORD.

LOVIBOND.

Well! now every thing is settled. The deeds are signed. So, madam, you are here, are you? Brother Oldcastle, I always told you how this would end. Ha! ha! ha!

OLDCASTLE.

If she had minded my instructions—

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! Instructions! You brought it all upon yourself. But 'tis better as it is: your head would have ached all the rest of your days. Ha! ha! ha! I am heartily glad of this. Ha! ha! come, Mr. Bellford, I'll give her away. Here, take your wife.

OLDCASTLE.

Wounds! I can't stand this. I'll not be a witness.
[*goes out.*]

LOVIBOND.

But you shall be a witness. You are a party concerned. You must come back. [*Exit after him.*]

BELLFORD.

Since they have agreed the matter, Harriet shall make her appearance. [*Exit.*]

MARY-ANN. (*alone*)

What does all this mean! Sure it can't be sister Harriet he talks of.

LOVIBOND. (*without*)

You must, you shall come back.

Enter BELLFORD, *leading in* HARRIET.

BELLFORD.

Don't be frightened. You are the object of my heart, and they will give you away.

LOVIBOND:

(*forcing in Oldcastle, without looking behind him*)

You are a party to the agreement: you must see her given away.

BELLFORD.

Here's the lady. (*leading her to Lovibond.*)

LOVIBOND.

Ay! ay! give me her hand. (*without seeing her.*)
you shall see the business done, Mr. Oldcastle. Here,
here; wounds! what is all this? Harriet!

OLDCASTLE.

Huzza! a reprieve!

MARY-ANN.

Ah! sister there? What have you been writing letters too! (*goes up to her*) I be glad to see you.

LOVIBOND.

What does all this mean? What brought you hither, Madam?

HAR-

HARRIET.

My love for this gentleman. (*She takes Belford by the hand*)

OLDCASTLE.

Ha! ha! ha! she is his wife all this time.

HARRIET.

I was not by any means worthy of you, Sir; and so I have transferred my affections where I think they will be placed to advantage.

LOVIBOND.

I am ready to sink into the ground with amazement!

OLDCASTLE.

Loll, toll, loll! brother Lovibond! you brought it all upon yourself. Ha! ha! ha! I pity and laugh at you. This is the education you have given her. Ha! ha!

LOVIBOND.

I shall die upon the spot.

OLDCASTLE.

Ha! ha! I saw what it would all end in. (*follows him about*) She would have been too young a wife for you, man. Ha! ha! I am heartily glad of it. Here, here, I'll give her away. Here Mr. Belford, take your wife.

BELFORD.

I accept her at your hands.

HARRIET.

And I give you mine, with all my heart !

OLDCASTLE.

Now, who understands education ? Come, Madam, come you home with me. (*taking hold of Mary Ann.*)

MARY-ANN.

Ah ! but I can't do that, for I be married as well as you, sifter. (*runs over to her*) He carried me to a parson, and it was for all the world, like what you used to say (*to Oldcastle*) about love, honour, and obey.

OLDCASTLE.

What do I hear ?

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

Oh ! ho ! ho ! what a day of adventures have I had !

OLDCASTLE.

Oh ! Mr. Brumpton ! what a life you have led me !

BRUMPTON.

Yet you must excuse me, Sir, when you recollect the letter the lady flung me out of the window.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

Flung him a letter! ha! ha!

BRUMPTON.

And when you reflect, that you yourself brought me into her presence to receive this letter, in which she prays me to be her deliverer!

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! the contriver of his own misfortunes! Gave her the opportunity himself!

BELFORD.

And when you consider, Mr. Lovibond, that you brought me Harriet's messages, and delivered me this letter with your own hand!

LOVIBOND.

How is this!

HARRIET.

A declaration of my heart: I had nobody to carry it but you.

OLDCASTLE.

The contriver of his own ruin! delivered her a letter himself! ha! ha! how well he knows the world!

BRUMPTON.

Belford, give me your hand. We have been struggling hard for two sisters, and fortune has crown'd our endeavours with success.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! Mary-Ann! you have deceived me, but I shall be glad to see you happy.

MARY-ANN.

And I am sure, I shall be alway glad to see you, if you live these three years to come. Sister Harriet, la! I longed like any thing to see you. I am glad we are both happy at last.

BRUMPTON.

A right use made of this event, will be of general service to us all. To these gentlemen it may prove a School for Guardians, where they will learn not to bring upon themselves the reproach of a dishonest, an amorous, and contemptible old age. As to us, Belford, and these ladies, who are now embarked on a voyage for life, we cannot fail of happiness.

To youth sure rapture marriage ever brings,
When from esteem the happy union springs,

F I N I S.

E P I L O G U E,

Spoken by Miss ELLIOT.

*LADIES, your servant—Servant, gentlemen all!
 The same good folks to you, both great and small.
 Here's MARY-ANN again:—but that an't fair!
 To jeer a simple girl you might forbear.
 Who knows, since married, tho' you laugh and gaze,
 But MARY-ANN may learn your London ways?
 May ape your fashions, since you've shewn her how,
 And drop the mask at once, as I do now.*

*Thus you behold, whatever the condition,
 To new extremes how easy the transition.
 'Tis so thro' life: to town from country fairs
 The clown comes up, and gapes, and laughs, and stares!
 Give him a liv'ry—whims unknown before!
 He learns his master's follies to do o'er;
 He drinks, turns coxcomb, and betts five to four.
 Pray, may I, ladies, touch your modish life,
 And shew good sense and fashion there at strife?
 "Ob! do, Miss Elliot, says a prude with spite,
 Pull 'em to pieces; bring their faults to light;
 Pulling to pieces is my dear delight."
 Why then each fair one seems a diff'rent creature
 From what she's meant, and travesties her nature,*

*Proud of defects, FLIRTILLA swims along,
 Politely weak, and elegantly wrong.*

Through

*Through the gay round of time her only care
To fix the patch, and guide a straggling hair.*

*Lady CAMILLA, form'd to seize the rein,
To rival John, and smack along the plain;
In London sickens with dissembled airs,
And "help me, help me up these odious stairs."*

*Nature's best gifts we all with pride disclaim;
We lisp, we totter, deaf, and blind, and lame.
The tongue indeed we women n'er confine;
Scandal's too dear a pleasure to resign.
Scandal, and cards, tea, mirth, and spleen, a ball,
Comus! the monkey too! and there's the life of all.
A life of whim! till from the faded eye,
And wither'd form the trembling graces fly.*

*There's a true picture!—how do ye like it, ladies?
How is the light? And how do you think the shade is?
A copy hence our simple girl may make;
Unless she should this wiser counsel take,
Be rul'd by reason for your beauty's sake.
Reason still gives to radiant eyes their grace,
Warren's imperial milk for ev'ry face!
Beauty, ye fair, may forge the lover's chain;
But the mind's charms your empire must maintain.*

THE
CHOICE,

A
COMEDY.

THE
CHOICE,
A
COMEDY,
IN TWO ACTS.

Performed at the
THEATRE ROYAL
IN
DRURY-LANE.

Ut Nemo in sese tentat descendere ! Nemo !
Sed præcedenti spectatur Mantica Tergo.

PERSIUS.

Familiare est Hominibus omnia sibi ignoscere,
Nihil aliis remittere.

VELL. PAT.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

WOODVIL,

Mr. PACKER.

Sir WILLIAM LOVE-
WORTH,

Mr. YATES.

LOVEWORTH, his Son,

Mr. PALMER.

W O M E N.

Mrs. WOODVIL,

CLARISSA,

Mrs. YATES.

WATCHIT,

Miss BRADSHAW.

THE
CHOICE.

ACT the FIRST.

Enter WOODVIL *and* LOVEWORTH.

WOODVIL.

YOU surprise me, Mr. Loveworth: a person of your taste exchange the pleasures of a town-life, for rooks and country squires at this dead season of the year! There is some mystery in all this.

LOVEWORTH.

My dear Mr. Woodvil, dissipation has had its day; and now calm reflection and the sentiments of the heart outweigh all the pleasures of the vain and giddy.

WOODVIL.

So! grown a moralist!—Well, be the cause what it may, I am glad to see you at FAIRFIELD.—And yet all this hurry, and a young lady with you!—My wife's curiosity will be at work, if she finds her in the next room. Who is the lady?

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

Mr. Woodvil, the happiness of my life is now at stake. Her beauty, her merit, her accomplishments justify my choice.

WOODVIL.

Married?

LOVEWORTH.

These ten days.

WOODVIL.

With your father's consent?

LOVEWORTH.

No, there's the rub: his consent nothing can obtain.

WOODVIL.

This may prove a serious business: the violence of Sir William's temper——

LOVEWORTH.

Yes; he storms and raves at his usual rate; and if your interposition cannot moderate his rage, I am ruined.

WOODVIL.

Has he seen the lady?

LOVEWORTH.

No; he positively refuses; swears he will never
acknow-

acknowledge her; is determined to marry again; and I am to be disinherited. In that resolution I left him in town, and you are now troubled with this visit.

WOODVIL.

If I can be of use to you, I shall think nothing a trouble. But your father, I fancy, lay at Grove-Place last night.

LOVEWORTH.

At Grove-Place! then must I fly the country.

WOODVIL.

No occasion for that: do nothing in a hurry. Suppose I go over to him?—What is his objection to the match?

LOVEWORTH.

His objection, according to the way of the world, is neither more nor less than——

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Sir William Loveworth sends his compliments, Sir. He reached Grove-Place last night, and if you are not engaged, he will wait upon you to dinner.

WOODVIL.

That's unlucky: I can't see him to day. Tell Sir William that——

LOVEWORTH.

You had better see him: let me be no hindrance:
I can dispose of myself out of his way.

WOODVIL.

It shall be so: a thought has just occurred to me.
Where is the servant?

WATCHIT.

In the Hall, Sir.

WOODVIL.

Very well: Mr. Loveworth, excuse me for a moment. [Exit.

LOVEWORTH.

Mrs. Watchit, you remember your promise. Secrecy is the word.

WATCHIT.

You may depend upon me, Sir.

LOVEWORTH.

My father's servant does not know that I am in the country, I hope.

WATCHIT.

Not a syllable: do you take me for a mar-plot?

LOVEWORTH.

You mistake me; I know your prudence. I must not be seen by my father.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

By no means: I know Sir William, and so does the whole country round. He will be like a whirlwind, the moment he enters the house; and yet what he should storm at, I can't tell. You have married a sweet young lady, that I can see already: she is somebody, I'll warrant her; and what if she has not a great fortune? Snap your fingers at fortune, Sir; she is as good a sort of a lady as a body would wish to know.

LOVEWORTH.

She is obliged to you, Mrs. Watchit. Keep our secret, and it may be in my power some time or other to—

Enter WOODVIL.

WOODVIL.

I have desired to see Sir William. I have a scheme, which, should it happen to succeed, may give a turn to your affairs. You must not be seen by him.—
Watchit, there is an apartment above stairs?

WATCHIT.

Yes, Sir, the alcove room.

WOODVIL.

There you may be concealed.

WATCHIT.

To be sure, and his lady with him.

U 2

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

Hold you your tongue; that will not do.—Loveworth, your lady shall dine with Sir William.

LOVEWORTH.

Not for the world: expose her to a hurricane as soon.

WOODVIL.

Po! let me conduct this business. I can introduce her as a relation of mine: Sir William will then see her without prejudice, and who knows but—Say no more about it; I know it will do; trust to me.

WATCHIT.

But your lady, Sir; won't her curiosity——

WOODVIL.

'Sdeath! I forgot that. Loveworth, my wife must not see you. Where is she now, Watchit?

WATCHIT.

She walked out an hour ago: went across the meadow towards the village: there is some scandal stirring there about farmer ASHFIELD's daughter; and she is gone to make her enquiries.

WOODVIL.

Just as I could wish: Watchit, do you keep her from seeing my friend Loveworth, and his lady shall be a relation, whom my wife has never seen; my niece just come from Salisbury. That will do.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

But how shall we keep my mistress quiet, Sir? You know, if there is a secret going forward, she will have a hundred eyes, all prying about.

WOODVIL.

Do you put her hundred eyes to sleep: go now and learn where she is, for fear of a surprize.

WATCHIT.

Here will be such a piece of work. *[Exit.]*

WOODVIL.

I had like to have forgot: you have not told me Sir William's objection.

LOVEWORTH.

The old objection, Sir: she has no fortune; and this is not an age, in which merit without money is likely to meet with much favour.

WOODVIL.

That is among the few opinions, in which mankind have suffered no sort of change.

LOVEWORTH.

Very true: systems of philosophy have sprung up in the world, varied, fluctuated, and given way to new devices: but he, who first said that beauty, eloquence, wisdom, and all sufficient merit were included in money, was the father of a sect, that spreads from the city-counter to the drawing room, and takes in at once the great vulgar and the small.

U 3

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

And your father is so deep in his money-maxims, that reason will make a feeble stand against pounds, shillings, and pence.

LOVEWORTH.

And yet the amiable qualities of the person I have chosen—Hush!—I was beginning a very unfashionable panegyrick, and luckily I am interrupted,

Enter CLARISSA.

WOODVIL.

My friend, Ma'am, has let me into the whole secret, and I give you joy.

CLARISSA.

You will find me a troublesome guest, Sir,

WOODVIL:

When I have the honour of being better known to you, you will do me the justice to think that a visit from Mrs. Loveworth will always make me happy.

CLARISSA.

The afflicted can make but very indifferent company, and my spirits are in such an agitation—

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Sir William is arrived, Sir. He and my mistress are now walking up the avenue.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

Sir William?—Heavens!—where shall I fly?

WOODVIL.

Don't be alarmed, Ma'am, he shan't surprize you:
I'll step and meet him. *[Exit.]*

WATCHIT.

And I'll keep a look out for you: don't be frightened. *[Exit.]*

CLARISSA.

I shall never be able to support myself in his presence. He considers me as a disgrace to his family.

LOVEWORTH.

Disgrace, Clarissa! he will in time acknowledge you an honour to his family.

CLARISSA.

I cannot think of seeing him. I am the cause of all this distraction and uneasiness. Why would you make me marry without his consent? When I think to what a degree I have incensed him against you—Let me entreat you, Mr. Loveworth, to remove me from this house. Indeed I am terribly disconcerted.

LOVEWORTH.

My love, I grant, were you to face him at once in the character of my wife, the shock would be too great. But Sir William does not know you. My friend Mr. Woodvil takes an interest in our mutual happiness. He will introduce you as his relation,

lation, just come upon a visit out of Wiltshire. By degrees you may make an impression upon my father, and win from him his consent and approbation. The experiment is worth the trial. Consider the consequence it is of to me.—Why those tears, my love?

CLARISSA.

Should he persist in his resolution to disinherit you, I am the sad occasion of your ruin. (*weeps*)

LOVEWORTH.

You will be the occasion of all that's dear to me in life. Dry up those tears. We will depart this moment, if you chuse it.

CLARISSA.

No; I have summoned up resolution. I chuse to stay. I have involved you in difficulties, and the least I now can do, is to endeavour to extricate you. I feel new courage. I will see Sir William: I shall be able to go through it. But let me see, what character am I to assume? Oh! Mr. Woodvil's niece; and from where?

LOVEWORTH,

Just arrived from Salisbury.

CLARISSA.

Very well; be it so. I'll undertake the part: it is a fair stratagem, and if I succeed in it——

Enter

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Sir, Sir; Madam, Madam; they are coming, and Mrs. Woodvil is so curious to see you! Fly, Mr. Loveworth; run up stairs, or you will be discovered.

LOVEWORTH.

'Sdeath! which way?

WATCHIT.

There; don't you see the stairs? Make haste; dispatch.

LOVEWORTH.

I am gone: the field is your own. [*Exit.*

CLARISSA,

How my heart flutters!

WATCHIT.

Courage, Madam; you can't fail of success.

Enter WOODVIL.

WOODVIL. (*looking back as he enters*)

This way, Sir William: here is my niece. (*to Clarissa*) Now call up all your resolution.

CLARISSA, (*to Watchit*)

I shall certainly expire.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

You have nothing to fear: play this card well, and the game is yours.

WOODVIL.

Walk in, Sir William.

Enter Sir WILLIAM, and Mrs. WOODVIL.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ay, I shall be glad to see a relation of yours, Mr. Woodvil.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Where is she? I am not acquainted with that branch of your family, my dear (*to Woodvil*) upon my word! (*stands to look at Clarissa*) And is this your niece? Well! you may be proud of her. I never saw your poor sister, Mr. Woodvil: she has been dead these ten years I think. A fine figure truly! Is she like her mother? Sir William, don't you admire her? What a complexion! and such a sweetness in her countenance. You are welcome in these parts. I am free spoken, but when you and I are better acquainted, you will like me prodigiously, that I promise you.

CLARISSA.

That I dare say, Ma'am, but I cannot promise myself that I shall be so happy as to improve in your esteem.

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

She is a sweet girl : why did you conceal her from me all this time ? It was very cross of you, Mr. Woodvil.

WOODVIL.

Sir William, won't you salute my niece ?

CLARISSA, (*turning to Watchit*)

I shall sink into the earth.

Sir WILLIAM. (*advancing*)

She is rather bashfull and shy.

WOODVIL.

That will wear off : you will find her elegantly accomplished. Clarissa, my friend Sir William Loveworth.

Sir WILLIAM.

I am glad of this opportunity of paying my respects to so much beauty and so much apparent merit.

[*Salutes her.*]

CLARISSA. (*in confusion*)

Sir—I—you do me honour, Sir. (*turns to Watchit*)
What shall I do ?

WATCHIT.

Have a good heart, and the day is your own, Ma'am.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You may be proud of her, Mr. Woodvil: she is elegance itself.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

A perfect model! you never told me of her, my dear. (*to Woodvil*) And where have you hid yourself all this time? But you and I will have some talk by and by, and you shall tell me your whole history.

Sir WILLIAM.

Have you heard the history of my son, Mr. Woodvil? Do you know what the fellow has done?

WOODVIL.

Nothing that you may not overlook, I hope.

Sir WILLIAM.

Overlook! he has done what I shall never forgive: he has gone and married without my consent, the blockhead! and thrown himself away for ever.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well!—you surprize me: to whom? When? When? What sort of a body? What's her name? What's her fortune?

Sir WILLIAM.

Fortune? Not a groat. A booby! a numskull! a vile ungratefull profligate! the money I spent upon his education! yet you see what it ends in: could you think him capable of so rash an action?

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

I always thought him guarded and prudent.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

And did not he consult your will and pleasure?

CLARISSA. (*aside to Watchit*)

I wish you would lead me out of the room.

Sir WILLIAM.

Consult my will and pleasure?—Yes, after he had played the fool; after he had ruined himself.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well, that was wrong indeed: I do think that was wrong. Mr. Woodvil, he should have had his father's leave: don't you think he should? I am sure you do, and so does your niece here, for she looks like a good girl. There is no defending your son, Sir William. I always thought him a promising young man, but after such an evil step, there is not a word to say for him: is there, Miss?

CLARISSA.

It is not for me to accuse the gentleman.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, Ma'am, no; you are too polite to interfere in family-matters; but you can say nothing in his favour. Marry a woman without a groat!

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

A love affair, I suppose.

Sir WILLIAM.

A bankrupt affair! he will be beggar'd by it. He must please his own fancy, truly! and he has done it. 'Sdeath! that a black-eye and a white skin should rob a man of his senses!

WOODVIL.

Well, well; she may be a deserving young lady, and her family may make the connection not turn out a bad one.

Sir WILLIAM.

Her family? Let her family maintain her; why is the burthen to be thrown on me? Her family has no objection; I will answer for 'em: but is that an excuse? Mrs. Woodvil, I appeal to you, and to you, Ma'am, though your uncle puts in a good word for a graceless—Now do you think *(to Clarissa)* young as you are, do you think any apology can be made for disobedience to a father?

CLARISSA.

The question is too difficult for me, Sir; I am not a proper judge.

Sir WILLIAM.

I will cut him off with a shilling, that I can tell you: does not he know that I married a woman of fortune? That my father did the same? All my family from father to son have had the table of interest

terest in view, and not one of us ever did a foolish thing out of generosity. This booby of mine is the first of the name that ever did a disinterested thing.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

There is a great deal in what you say, Sir William.

WOODVIL.

Prithee don't you——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

What do I do? I don't meddle. What I say is all between ourselves: I speak only by way of conversation. Fortune is always something to be sure: I think it was twenty thousand I brought you, my love: no, not twenty; yes, first and last: ten down: five by the death of—Ay, very true: first and last full twenty thousand: but then I had consent of uncles and aunts, and cousins, and relations, and all the old folks.

WOODVIL.

Po! stuff! how you run on!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Nay, don't snub a body; you was welcome, my love; had it been double, you should have had it all; that is with consent of prudent people; nothing of the sort should be without consent. Whatever your uncle says, let me advise you, Miss, never marry without consent.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

How unlucky all this is! (*aside to Watchit*)

WOODVIL.

And yet, Sir William, since it is done, it may be for the best. Have you seen the lady?

SIR WILLIAM.

Seen her! What should I see her for? Did you ever hear a man reason like him? (*to Clarissa*) Do you think, Ma'am,—you seem prudent, and I will ask you?—Do you think it would be right to see a person, who has thrown my family into such confusion, and has been the ruin of my son? I could only speak the language of reproach: would it be right of me to say harsh things to her face?

CLARISSA.

I believe you would not willingly act so cruel a part.

SIR WILLIAM.

No, no; it would answer no end.

WOODVIL.

I beg your pardon: you might find yourself mistaken: you might, perhaps, see a lady possessed of accomplishments, that would kindle up a flame even in your own breast, fond as you are of serving your interest.

SIR WILLIAM.

No, no; there I should be proof. I am not
tinder,

tinder, to take fire at the sparkling of an eye. I have seen as much love among people who marry without any at all, as I have among your sighing, whining, generous lovers.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

That I can vouch. There was no great matter of love, Mr. Woodvil, between us at first: at least on your part; but all in good time; it came by degrees: and, I think, you will allow that we have lived pure and happy.

WOODVIL. (*aside to Mrs. Woodvil*)

I wish you would not make yourself ridiculous.

Sir WILLIAM.

Mr. Woodvil, to cut the matter short, my son has ruined himself.—A blockhead, to throw himself away in this manner!—Did you ever see the fellow? (*to Clarissa*)

CLARISSA. (*in great confusion*)

Yes, Sir; I have seen him; and when you see him again, perhaps——

Sir WILLIAM.

Never; I will never see his face.—Marry without my consent, and a beggar too!—He shall see that I am not to be trifled with. My fortune is in my own power; he shall be disinherited, and that's the marriage-portion he will get by this amiable lady, on whom he has fixed his affections.

CLARISSA.

Oh! Heaven! support me. (*she faints*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*catching her in his arms*)

Hey! what's the matter now? She is not well.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Watchit, run for the hartshorn.

WATCHIT.

I will, Madam. Poor young lady! You had better take her into the air, Sir. Dear me, I am in such a flutter. [*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM. (*supporting her*)

She looks very handsome. Is she subject to these disorders, Mr. Woodvil?

WOODVIL.

I fancy not; she is tired after her journey.

Sir WILLIAM.

Her colour returns: she is coming to herself. Very beautiful indeed! If that fool, my son, had made such a choice! How do you find yourself, Ma'am?

CLARISSA.

Oh! Sir!—I beg your pardon.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Leave her to my care. Step with me, my dear; the air will do her good. Come along. [*Exit.*

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You have not as yet recovered your strength: let me attend you.

CLARISSA.

You are very polite, Sir, but I would not give you so much trouble.

Sir WILLIAM.

Trouble! it will be a pleasure. Mr. Woodvil, I shall return in a moment. [*Exit with Clarissa.*]

WOODVIL.

He seems struck already. How I shall laugh, if my scheme succeeds!

Enter LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH. (*peeping in*)

Mr. Woodvil, may I venture?

WOODVIL.

For a moment you may. If you but knew how things are going on here——

LOVEWORTH.

I overheard it all. But what have I done to Mrs. Woodvil? She takes a part against me.

WOODVIL.

She talks in her usual strain, without an idea of what she would be at. Keep out of her way. I would

not have her know you are in the house: the secret would soon escape, only by way of conversation, as she calls it. I cannot help laughing at this plot of mine: should your wife steal into Sir William's good graces, before he knows who she is—Ha! ha!

LOVEWORTH.

The contrivance is yours; and if it succeeds, I shall be for ever obliged to you.

WOODVIL.

It is an honest artifice, and worth the experiment.

LOVEWORTH.

Poor Clarissa! I tremble to think what she feels all this time. The hopes and fears, that agitate her tender bosom, make the interval dreadful.—'Sdeath! I hear somebody coming.

WOODVIL.

Fly; leave the room. No, you need not. All is safe. It is only *Watchit*: we shall get some intelligence from her.

Enter WATCHIT. (laughing)

WATCHIT.

Oh! this is charming. I shall die with laughing.

WOODVIL.

What's the matter?

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Just as you could wish: Sir William is gone into the garden with her. She trembles. and blushes; and he smiles, and says civil things, and takes her by the hand; and she wishes to avoid him, and he follows her more eagerly; and my mistress is all in a-maze, and does not know what to make of it. She is sure there is some secret going forward, and according to custom, she will never rest till she finds it out. I hear her coming. Mr. Loveworth, the plot's discovered, and we are all undone, if she sees you.

WOODVIL.

And I shall be talked to death, if she sees me. This way, Mr. Loveworth: follow me; I have something further to say to you.

LOVEWORTH.

I attend you. Watchit, be upon your guard.

WATCHIT.

Po! po! never stand talking. Take care of yourself. Don't you hear her coming? Away with you.
[pushing him.]

LOVEWORTH.

A thousand thanks: I shall reward your pains.
[Exit.]

WATCHIT.

Hush! not a word. How troublesome these men are! now for her curiosity, and a specimen of my talents.

Enter Mrs. WOODVIL.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Watchit! you here alone! where is your master? Where is Mr. Woodvil? I left him here: where is he gone? What is he about? Is any body with him?

WATCHIT.

Not so loud, if you please, Ma'am: he desired not to be disturbed. Mr. Ruin, the lawyer, is with him: business of great importance upon the anvil.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Indeed! tell me; what is it?

WATCHIT.

Law, Ma'am! as if you did not know: why, you are acquainted with the whole affair.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Not a syllable, as I am a sinner: nobody ever tells me any thing; and yet, I don't know why. I never repeat a word; I am as close as oak. Well, tell me, Watchit; tell me the business.

WATCHIT.

Why, for a matter o'that, if you don't know it already, it is fit you should. But then, Heaven help me! I am but a servant, and if the like of me talks in the family——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

But you are safe with me; you may do good by imparting every thing to me.

WATCHIT.

Yes, Ma'am, I know that; but my master has forbid me to say a word.

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

He shall never know that you spoke to me. I never betray any body. I always think before I speak.

WATCHIT.

Why then, if you will promise——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I do promise, and I promise to reward you. Well?

WATCHIT.

Don't you know something about this young lady, Ma'am?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No; nothing upon the face of the earth, except that she is Mr. Woodvil's niece.

WATCHIT.

Yes, that of course: every body knows that. But, look you here, Ma'am—I am ruined if you ever say you heard it from me—Her errand in coming to this house is whimsical enough—She is in love; deep, far gone!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Ay!

WATCHIT.

And is come into these parts in pursuit of the person she is so much smitten with.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Go on; go on, Watchit: who is she in love with? tell me all.

WATCHIT.

Can't you guess?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No, quite in the dark about it. Well, who is it?

WATCHIT.

You know how disobliged Sir William is by his son's misconduct; and you know that he has threatened to disinherit young Mr. Loveworth, and marry again.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Right; go on.

WATCHIT.

Now this young lady—but upon my life you must take no notice—this young lady is in love with Sir William up to the eyes, and my master would be glad to make a match of it. Who can blame him, if he wants to provide a good settlement for his own relation?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

To be sure.

WATCHIT.

My master you know is a little shy: he does not
like

like to open the affair too abruptly to Sir William; and that's what, I believe, he is now contriving with his attorney. Leave it all to their management, Ma'am. If you interfere, master will suspect me.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well, well! very well! any thing more?

WATCHIT.

Did not you see how the lady fainted away, when Sir William asked her opinion?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

So she did; I see it all plain enough now.

WATCHIT.

When a young lady faints into a man's arms——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No doubt; the meaning is clear.

WATCHIT.

I have had some chat with her: she is hurt to the very quick to see Sir William made unhappy by his son: she thinks him the best of characters, and what is very odd, she says he is the handsomest man she ever set eyes upon. She saw him last summer at the musick-meeting at Salisbury, and has raved about him ever since.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Indeed!—It will be a good match for the girl, if it can be brought about.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Yes, for sure : she owned her love to me, but she rather thinks Sir William a little cruel—no, no; she did not say cruel ;—A little severe to the son : he ought, she says, to make a provision for him ; and if it should be her luck to marry Sir William, she will intercede for the young gentleman, though he has been so imprudent as to marry without his father's consent.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

The good girl !

WATCHIT.

Yes, she is all goodness ; she bears the character of it. As sweet a temper as a body would wish to know. As I live and breathe, here comes my master—No ; It's Sir William. Don't take any notice to him. Leave it all to Mr. Woodvil's contrivance. He knows how to bring about the match. Here he comes, Ma'am. I am gone. If you say a word of what I have been telling you, it will be as much as my place is worth. [Exit,

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Go, go your way. Truly ! as if I did not know how to keep a secret.

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir WILLIAM.

I admire your garden, Mrs. Woodvil. It is much
im-

improved since I saw it; and your niece, as Milton has it,

——Oft stooping to support
Each flow'r of tender stalk, mindless the while
Herself, the fairest unsupported flow'r.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

That is so pretty, and so gallant!

Sir WILLIAM.

If that son of mine had proposed for her, what objection could I have made? None; I should have been pleased with an alliance in my friend Woodvil's family.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I am really much chagrined for your son. There is no saying any thing in his defence.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, let him repent it; and he will have reason: I shall marry again. Your niece, I think, has never been in these parts before: any particular reason for her coming now?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No;—I believe—(*smiles at him*) don't ask me; I never know any thing.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, I beg pardon.

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No harm, Sir William—I could—But no, no; I know nothing—I can't help smiling—you would smile too if you knew all: but let Mr. Woodvil tell you.

Sir WILLIAM.

Well, I suppose he will, if it be proper.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Yes, I dare say he will.—Well, you are a lucky man. Pray, let me ask you: was you at Salisbury last summer?

Sir WILLIAM.

I was, Madam. why do you ask?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Ask me no questions.—It is diverting too—(*smiles at him*) Only now by way of conversation, did you see the young lady you have been just talking to in our garden?

Sir WILLIAM.

She escaped my observation.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well, I wonder at it.—Nothing escapes her. (*smiles at him*) She saw you.—Promise me not to say a word——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You may rely upon me.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

It is very whimsical:—she saw you and is deeply smitten.

Sir WILLIAM.

With me?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

With you: take no notice. Mr. Woodvil will take it very ill, if he hears that I said a word. She grieves to see you afflicted as you are by the behaviour of your son. She takes an interest in every thing that concerns you.

Sir WILLIAM.

I am greatly obliged to her.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

So you are, if you know all.—Well, young girls do fall in love so unaccountably. She is up to the eyes in love with you. (*laughing heartily*)

Sir WILLIAM.

In love with me!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

She loves you; I know it. So now you may make your own use of it.—And look ye—She rather thinks you severe to your son, and I can tell you, if she has ever any influence, you will find her his best friend.
She

She will intercede for him; she will never be at rest till you make some provision for him.

Sir WILLIAM.

A generous way of thinking.—In love with me!—
(*looking pleased*) No, no; it cannot be.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

It is certainly so.

Sir WILLIAM. (*laughing*)

No, no;—she is very handsome. If my son had been able to distinguish her merit——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Who could have blamed him?

Sir WILLIAM.

Quite another thing that would have been. You are a laughing at me all this time.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Never suspect it, Sir William: did you ever know me guilty of a joke?

Sir WILLIAM.

Your niece is quite recovered now, I dare say.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You saw how she fainted in your arms?

Was

Sir WILLIAM.

Was there any thing particular in that?

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*smiles at him*)

You don't know the impresson you have made.—She was terribly shocked at seeing you so unhappy. She took it to heart.

Sir WILLIAM.

I'll take another turn in the garden, I think. Now I recollect, it was with a peculiar glance she eyed me. Will you take a turn in the garden?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You had better go alone. They may suspect that I have been telling you.—Hush! not a word—here she comes, and Mr. Woodvil with her.

Enter WOODVIL, and CLARISSA.

WOODVIL.

Come, come, you are well now, and the company won't allow you to shun them.

Sir WILLIAM.

By no means. I hope you find yourself perfectly recovered. (*going up to her.*)

CLARISSA. (*disconcerted*)

It was only a sudden surprize, Sir: it is over now: I am much obliged to you.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

I heartily rejoice to see you so well. (*goes to Mrs. Woodvil*) Did you mark those stolen glances? (*aside*)

CLARISSA. (*aside to Woodvil*)

If you but knew the inward conflict I endure.

WOODVIL.

Well, well; summon up your spirits. (*aside*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*looks at her*)

She is wonderfully agreeable. (*aside to Mrs. Woodvil*) I am sorry, Madam—(*going to Clarissa*) that I abruptly mentioned any thing of my son's behaviour. I spoke harshly perhaps, and my violence might have a sudden effect upon your sensibility.

CLARISSA. (*in confusion*)

I will not dissemble, Sir, that the warmth and violence of your resentment did overpower my spirits. I am sorry that your son has offended you. If I might presume, his case may admit of some alleviation. The lady may, perhaps, be to blame.

Sir WILLIAM.

To blame! ay, to be sure she is. A woman without any substance, without a shilling——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

That is an objection for certain.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

And yet the lady may be of a family——

Sir WILLIAM.

Yes, family enough, but a ruined family.

CLARISSA.

Misfortune you will hardly think an object of ridicule, Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

It is a good reason to shun the alliance.

CLARISSA.

I am an unfit person to take the lady's part.
[Walks away.]

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You see how unwilling she is to contradict you,
(*aside to Sir William*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside to Mrs. Woodvil*)

I admire her of all things.

WOODVIL. (*aside to Clarissa*)

Consider that my friend Loveworth's happiness is at stake; go on with this, and he will have reason to thank you.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*aside to Sir William*)

I told you she would take your son's part.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside*)

I like her the better for it: it bespeaks a generous mind.—Madam, (*following Clarissa*) I admire your delicacy: you have something to offer in behalf of the lady, whom my son—I never saw her, and I believe I never shall. Do you think it would be right in me to see her, only to speak the language of reproach?

CLARISSA.

She would never be able to bear the presence of an incensed and angry father, who imputes to her the distractions of his family——(*almost in tears*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside to Mrs. Woodvil*)

How tender her sentiments are!

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*aside to him*)

She feels for your uneasiness. I think you may be now convinced, that all I have told you is true.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside*)

Yes, I see it plainly: I have always had a young look. (*walking towards Clarissa*) I shall be glad to hear so agreeable an advocate, though I fancy you will find the cause already determined.

CLARISSA.

I would not presume too far, Sir; but still there may be something to say for your son. His regard for the lady may be founded on a sincere esteem for her good qualities; for good qualities she may have; it is at least possible that she may.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Po! that's a supposition in the air.

CLARISSA. (*in confusion*)

I grant it, Sir.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*to Sir William*)

Mark her deference for you.

CLARISSA.

I can't pretend to vindicate the lady, Sir. Of her merit I can have but little to say: but your son—he has undoubted virtues.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside to Woodvil*)

How does she know?

WOODVIL.

She has heard me speak of him.

Sir WILLIAM.

Why, to say the truth, Madam, my son had some merit; till he ruined all by this rash action: the fellow did carry his letter of recommendation about him.

CLARISSA.

Then the lady, on whom he has fixed his choice, is to be pitied. If her inclination is not merely mercenary, but raised and kindled by desert; if she sincerely loves him, and if by marrying him, she has fa-

crificed herself, and the object of her affection too—
(walks away, endeavouring to suppress her tears)

Sir WILLIAM. *(to Woodvil)*

She has a delicate way of thinking.

WOODVIL.

The most tender-hearted girl in the world.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

And I fancy she is a little *nervish* into the bargain:
 I used to be *nervish* myself.

Sir WILLIAM.

She affects me strangely. Come, we'll talk no
 more about this unlucky business. With your leave,
 Madam, *(going to Clarissa)* we will change the subject.

CLARISSA.

I should be sorry to give you displeasure, Sir. I
 hope I have not presumed too far. *(she walks away)*
 Heigho!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

A tender symptom that sigh. *(to Sir William)*

Sir WILLIAM. *(advancing towards Clarissa)*

You should not sigh, Madam; it is a bad habit.—
 She is an angel!—*(advancing nearer)* A young lady,
 like you, should be all gaiety, all wit, pleasure, and
 vivacity.—*(smiling)* You have no reason, I hope,
 for sighing.

Enter

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Dinner's upon table, Sir.

WOODVIL.

Very well: come, Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

Will you please to favour me with your hand, Ma'am?

CLARISSA. *(frightened)*

You do me too much honour, Sir.

Sir WILLIAM.

The honour is to me. *(he takes her hand)* Mrs. Woodvil, you are right *(smiling at her)* Mr. Woodvil, you have an elegant young lady here—Madam, I have the honour to attend you.

[Exit with Clarissa.]

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Come, Mr. Woodvil, come along, my love. I am in the secret for all you, and I hope you will be able to make a match of it, *[Exit.]*

WOODVIL.

In the secret is she? Watchit, have you been blabbing?

WATCHIT.

Not for the world, Sir: she knows nothing of the matter.

WOODVIL.

Very well: keep her in the dark, and things may go on as I could wish. [Exit.

WATCHIT.

This is charming; the hook is baited, and Sir William will be gudgeon enough to bite. Oh! ho! ho! my stars! this is for ever the way of the world.

Men for their actions call their neighbours fools,
Then do the same, and mock their former rules,

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T the S E C O N D.

Enter WATCHIT and LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH.

IN love with her, say you?

WATCHIT.

In love; up to his eyes; he has it through the very heart; passionately fond of her. They are all together below stairs; Mrs. Woodvil, by my contrivance, has helped to bring it all about. She thinks she is in the secret, and is completely happy that she has something that she ought to tell nobody, and which burns in her breast till she tells it to every body. Mr. Woodvil is pleased to see his scheme in a fair way to succeed. He is every moment running out of the room, to laugh in private at the whole affair. There, Sir; does not that make you happy?

LOVEWORTH.

I am for ever obliged to you, Mrs. Watchit. This is the luckiest incident! my father has plunged deeper into the snare than I expected.

WATCHIT.

Yes; he is caught. All dinner-time his attention was fixed upon your lady; and the sweet confusion she was in convinced Sir William, that it

was the blush of love that coloured her cheek. When the ladies withdrew, he would not stick to his bottle, according to custom: no, no; he is tired of drinking; he rose from table, and went about the house from room to room in quest of your lady, struggling to conceal his design, and looking so foolish at every disappointment! At last he found her, and ladies, says he, I am come to beg a dish of tea of you.

LOVEWORTH.

He never used to drink tea.

WATCHIT.

I know it. And then had you but seen him at the tea-table, with his awkward civility, watching opportunities to assist the ladies, and with a bustle of good-nature putting every thing into confusion.

LOVEWORTH.

Perfectly like him: I know his way.

WATCHIT.

The least motion was too much for your lady's delicacy; it gave him pain to see her have so much trouble: "Ma'am, give me leave to pour out the tea for you.—Sir, you give yourself too much trouble—My dearest Madam, to attend you is a pleasure;"—And at last, in a hurry of politeness, he tumbled down the tea-table, broke the china, and scalded the dogs. They fell a barking; he made apologies; "ladies I beg your pardon.—Sir, you need not.—I protest it was an accident: bow, wow, wow;" and so all was uproar, laughter, noise, and confusion.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

But poor Clarissa all this time!

WATCHIT.

She acts her part delightfully.

LOVEWORTH.

Has Sir William declared himself to her?

WATCHIT.

Not as yet, I believe: but he is struck with her, that is too plain. I don't know whether she sees it, but every body else does.

LOVEWORTH.

If he once takes it into his head to make love to her, it will be a stroke of surprize upon her. I fear she will hardly have courage enough to carry on the plot.

WATCHIT.

I'll be answerable for her. No want of talents there; that I can see fast enough.

LOVEWORTH.

Is there no danger of his coming up stairs?

WATCHIT.

Po! he can't stir: your lady has him like a great gudgeon at the end of her line.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

But Mrs. Woodvil may be prying about the house.

WATCHIT.

Never fear her; there is enough to employ her below stairs.

LOVEWORTH.

Well, amongst you be it. If Sir William is really smitten, some good may come of this.

WATCHIT.

We shall manage the old gentleman to some purpose. Hush! stay, stay; I hear somebody coming. Mrs. Woodvil, as I live and breathe: away, Mr. Loveworth; in there, into that room (*he runs in; she shuts the door*) Was there ever such a man? We shall be detected. (*speaks through the key-hole*) Bolt the door.

Enter Mrs. WOODVIL.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

So, Mrs. Busy-body! what were you doing in that room?

WATCHIT.

That room, Ma'am? I was not in that room. The door is locked, Ma'am.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Yes, I recollect: I locked it myself. Watchit,
come

come hither. There is some mystery in all this, which I don't comprehend.

WATCHIT.

Mystery, Ma'am?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Hold your tongue; listen to me. Mr. Woodvil was every moment running out of the room, and whispering with you, and stiffling a laugh, that I saw playing upon every feature of his face: what does all this mean?

WATCHIT.

Mean, Ma'am? Why that my master is glad to see his niece in a fair way of preferment. He is pleased, and he looks pleased: can any thing be more natural?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

There is something which I cannot penetrate. Mr. Woodvil and Sir William are now locked up in the study, and I am shut out: what is that for?

WATCHIT.

Dear Ma'am, the men always settle these things among themselves you know. There is money I suppose to be talked of, and jointures, and such like.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Watchit, I suspect you: you know more than you tell me. And this young lady,—I doubt whether she is my husband's niece. It looks romantic, I think.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Dear Madam!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Very romantic, and not a little marvellous. Why she knows nothing of the family. I have tried her; asked her questions; she blushes and looks silly, and gives answers that are just so much of nothing at all.

WATCHIT.

Dear me! you know, Ma'am, she was not educated at home: in a boarding-school at Chelsea from five years old.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Was she? That may be. And yet she is not like my husband's sister: all the family pictures are in that room: I'll go and examine the picture this moment; and, Watchit, do you go and intice her up stairs. I'll confront her and the picture; you will then see that there is no resemblance, none in the world. Step, and bring her up stairs. I'll go and view the picture this moment. [going.]

WATCHIT. (*aside*)

This must never be; we are all blown up in the air—Madam, Madam, you are quite wrong: this is all nothing: there is indeed an affair, which if—
a——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Ay! what affair? What is it?

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

People bewilder themselves about trifles: what I have to tell you is of consequence.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Indeed! of consequence, say you?

WATCHIT.

It is fit Mr. Woodvil should know it, and without loss of time: immediately; now, now, this very instant.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Tell it now then: how tedious you are?

WATCHIT.

Law, Ma'am! you are so impatient!—what shall I say to her? (*aside*)—The affair, Madam, is this—If what I hear be true, it is enough to alarm the whole family.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Bless me! what is it? Speak. Why conceal it from me?

WATCHIT.

You know my character, Ma'am; not one of your busy meddlers in what does not belong to them. And yet it were a pity Sir William should carry it in this fashion, and impose upon good people, without so much as a hint to put you all upon your guard.

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You terrify me: no more preamble; go on.

WATCHIT.

Have you heard nothing of Sir William lately?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Nothing particular.

WATCHIT.

Ah! Madam!—Don't you see that there is something unaccountable in his falling in love at first sight?—That is always his way; a general lover, that I can tell you. A seraglio of ladies! and though he rails at his son, he has gone lately and married one of his Madams, as privately as he could, and he thinks nobody knows it.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Are you sure of this?

WATCHIT.

What do I keep up, an intimacy with Mrs. TATTLEAID, his housekeeper, for, and all the rest of the family? Sad doings!—you must not say you had it from me—but you ought to know the affair, and nobody will make a discreeter use of it—he has married his Dulcinea; and because he fancies it a profound secret, he thunders out against his son; and all this pretended love, in a moment, for my master's niece, is only to decoy her, to deceive her, to ruin her, poor dear young lady! (*in tears*) I pity her so I do, and I am sure she deserves a better lot, than to be
the

the prey of such vile, profligate libertines, that's what she does. (*crying bitterly*)

Mrs. WOODVIL.

This is very good, this is kind of you, and the whole family is obliged to you. The girl's ruin must be prevented. I could not have thought Sir William capable——

WATCHIT.

Lord, Ma'am! he is capable of any thing: the whole parish knows it: but tenants are cautious, and hush-money goes a great way. There is not a moment to be lost, Ma'am: if something is not done, and that directly too——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Leave it to my discretion: I'll go and see what he and Mr. Woodvil are about.

WATCHIT.

Don't seem to know any thing of the matter to Sir William. Suppose you take my master aside.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

It is fit he should know it: stay you there: leave all to my discretion. we need not quarrel with Sir William you know. I am glad I have found this out. I'll keep my own secret, and yet have an eye upon their motions. This is such a discovery.

[*Exit.*]

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

So; I have got rid of her. She will go with her story to Mr. Woodvil, and he will only laugh at her.

Enter LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH.

A desperate game you have been playing, Watchit: this may embarass us all.

WATCHIT.

We should have been in a worse scrape, had her curiosity led her to discover you lurking in that room: don't you see that? Nothing but a new secret could have drawn her off from the scent she was upon.

LOVEWORTH.

Well, I don't know what to say to it?

Enter CLARISSA.

CLARISSA.

Oh! Watchit; I am frightened out of my wits. Mr. Loveworth, how do you find yourself all this while? I am so glad to have an opportunity of speaking to you. Sir William will never forgive me, when he finds out who I am. And what is in the wind with Mrs. Woodvil? I met her on the stairs; the cast of her eye terrified me to death. She has found out the whole affair, I believe.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

You are too easily alarmed: if you will but command yourself——

WATCHIT.

Run, Mr. Loveworth; get out of the way. I hear Sir William.

[Exit Loveworth and shuts the door after him.]

CLARISSA.

It were best to explain every thing to him.

WATCHIT.

By no means, Madam: things are not ripe as yet.

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ay, here she is. I have found her at last.

WATCHIT.

I am glad he is come, and now I'll leave 'em together (*aside*).—Did you see Madam Woodvil below stairs, Sir?

Sir WILLIAM.

I left her with my friend Woodvil.

WATCHIT.

They will be wanting me: you will excuse me, Madam: dear heart, there will be such a racket!

[Exit.]

Sir WILLIAM.

The wench is gone as I could wish.—(*stands looking at Clarissa*)—I never was so struck with beauty in all my days (*aside*)—I have been—(*advancing towards her*)—I have been impatient, Madam, for an opportunity: won't you be pleased to sit down?

CLARISSA.

I shall be ill again, I fear. (*sits down*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*smiling and setting near her*)

I say, Madam, I have been impatient for an opportunity to—to—what's come over me? I feel strangely affected (*aside*)—I am no longer a stranger, Madam, to you and your affections.

CLARISSA.

Sir! (*frightened*)

Sir WILLIAM.

I know you, Madam; I know your way of thinking; and what at first appeared a mystery——

CLARISSA.

If you know me, Sir, I hope your generosity will excuse——

Sir WILLIAM.

No apology, pray. I am glad to find that I am not an object of your hatred.

CLARISSA.

Hatred, Sir?—If you could read my heart, you would perceive there the most perfect esteem——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Esteem! (*laughing conceitedly*) with what reserve she phrases it? (*aside*)—Esteem, Madam? Call it by a more tender name. (*drawing nearer*) We are now alone, and may throw off all disguise. Come, come; (*smiling*) though you don't know it, I am in the secret.—Mrs. Woodvil has reposed a confidence in me: she has told me all.

CLARISSA.

Then, Sir, she has told you, that I am disposed to pay you every mark of attention and regard: that it is impossible to have a more sincere——

Sir WILLIAM.

You honour, Ma'am; you do me honour; and if you chuse to pass your time at Grove-Place——

CLARISSA.

It is the ambition of my heart, Sir. It is the happiness at which I aspire.

Sir WILLIAM.

This open, this candid declaration transports me, beyond the power of words to express. You confirm all that Mrs. Woodvil told me; and it shall be the study of my life to promote your happiness.

CLARISSA.

You have given a new turn to my spirits, Sir William: you have raised me to new life. I am for ever obliged to Mrs. Woodvil for bringing about what I despaired of ever attaining.

Sir WILLIAM.

We are both obliged to her: and as to my son—I can be very decisive—For your sake I am determined that he shall never enter my doors.

CLARISSA.

Sir! (*in great confusion*)

Sir WILLIAM.

An abandoned profligate!

CLARISSA.

Your words alarm me, Sir: you terrify me out of my senses. I thought Mrs. Woodvil had settled every thing.

Sir WILLIAM.

She has, Ma'am; she has settled matters to our mutual advantage. She has told me too, that you have a kind of partiality for my son: but your goodness must not be thrown away upon so undeserving a——

CLARISSA.

I confess, I have a partiality for him. And after all, his crime may not be so great as you imagine. He has married without a fortune; but you may find hereafter that he has connected himself with a person who will shew herself, in every part of her conduct, sensible of the obligation. If she has not brought riches into your family, she may have qualities that will more than atone for the want of fortune. Instead of the pride, and I may say, the insolence of wealth, compliance and condescension may be hers. If she has no right to expensive pleasures, she may practice

œconomy; and, Sir, she may be gratefull, in proportion to the kindness and generosity of the family, into which she has married.

Sir WILLIAM.

She argues the point well: she will suit my temper exactly. (*aside*) I admire your sentiments, Madam, but still——

CLARISSA.

Permit me, Sir, to say a word more. When a person in affluent circumstances, or of considerable expectations, can forego all views of interest, and follow the impulse of elegant, of generous affections; the lady, on whom he fixes his choice, may in return make his inclinations the rule of her conduct. In his happiness hers may center. And if I may speak out, she, who destitute of riches, brings honour and virtue into a family, carries with her what many families want.

Sir WILLIAM.

There is spirit and good sense in every thing she utters. (*aside*) You are a powerfull advocate; you plead too well for a graceless libertine. But have a care; don't carry it too far. You may prevail, and hurt yourself. It is your interest to urge no more. To differ from you will not be in my power. I feel your influence already: It is resistless, and so I shall go and tell your uncle this very moment. He shall know my mind immediately, and then, Madam, the whole affair will be concluded.—Your behaviour has charmed me; (*bowing to her*) it has won my heart. I shall wait upon you, as soon as I have talked the matter over with Mr. Woodvil. (*bows*)—She is a charming girl, and I'll marry her without delay.

[*Exit.*

CLARISSA.

Every thing concluded!—what does he mean?
There is some strange misunderstanding between us.

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT. (*laughing*)

Excuse me, Madam: I can't help laughing: this
goes on charmingly.

CLARISSA.

Oh! Watchit, what shall I do?

WATCHIT.

You have done admirably.

Enter LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH.

Yes, I am witness: she is carrying on an intrigue
in my hearing, and almost before my face.

CLARISSA.

Oh! Mr. Loveworth, if you had any feeling for
my distresses——

LOVEWORTH.

Distress! what distress? You have gained a com-
plete victory; you have made an absolute conquest.
Maintain your ground, and you force him presently
to surrender upon your own terms.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

We had better acquaint him with the whole truth. It does not become me to try these artifices. When he finds himself the dupe of this stratagem, he will never forgive me.

WATCHIT.

Dear Madam, you are enough to distract a body ; when things are in such a fine way, you are going to ruin yourself and Mr. Loveworth too.

LOVEWORTH.

It is even so: Sir William has not gone far enough as yet: when he is upon the very brink of matrimony with you, can he afterwards condemn my conduct? When he finds himself the captive of your beauty, will not that be my apology? And do you wish to deprive me of it?

CLARISSA.

You know I don't; but I am afraid of provoking his resentment: I have no right to pass a trick upon him.

WATCHIT.

Hush ! you are both disputing, and the enemy is stealing a march upon you. Here comes Madam Woodvil. Back to your room Mr. Loveworth, run back this moment.

LOVEWORTH.

Confusion ! that troublesome woman ! [Exit.

CLARISSA.

Let me go with him.

WATCHIT.

No, that will never do: you are wanted here. Stay, stay, I have the key, and I'll secure the door. I know her curiosity; but if she outwits me——(*locks the door*)

Enter Mrs. Woodvil.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Clarissa, I have been looking for you every where. ——So! (*seeing Watchit at the door*) At that door again?—What is going forward? (*aside*)——I say, where have you been, Clarissa? What have you been about?

WATCHIT.

I wanted to shew the lady the family pictures in the next room, Ma'am; but I can't find the key.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well, well; never mind it now: another time will do.—Clarissa, where have you been hiding yourself?—Your uncle wants you below: Sir William is prodigiously enamoured, and he means to finish the business without loss of time. I have given you a helping hand, I promise you.

CLARISSA.

Your intentions are very good, Ma'am; but you will excuse me at present. I cannot go down any more to night.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Yes; let us go down: get her away from this place. (*aside*)

Mrs. WOODVIL.

What are you meddling for, Mrs. Pert? What have you been saying?

CLARISSA.

She has said nothing improper: but the hurry of this affair—I have reasons for deferring it.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Reasons! what reasons? Tell me your reasons. Come, come; you must comply. Watchit, do you step and do as I ordered you.

WATCHIT.

Yes, Ma'am, I shall take care.

[*Exit.*]

CLARISSA.

Permit me to continue here.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

By no means: would you mar your fortune?

CLARISSA.

If you will insist upon it—

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Oh! it must be so. We cannot dispense with your company. (*going, looks back*) And now I will
see

see what Watchit was about in that room: I have a double key to every door in the house, though she little thinks it. Yes, here is the key. (*takes a candle off the table*) I will know what she has been about; I am resolved I will. (*goes to unlock the door*)

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT. (*peeping in and speaking softly*)

I thought as much: I guessed she would be at that work. The deuce go with it! how did she come by that key? What shall I do?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Now for it. (*opens the door and goes in*)

WATCHIT.

This is the very malice of fortune.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*within*)

A man here! help! murder! oh!

WATCHIT.

So; she faints; she falls in a swoon: the candle out too! oh! the luckiest accident!

Enter LOVEWORTH. (*in a violent hurry.*

LOVEWORTH.

Death and confusion! I am discovered.

WATCHIT.

No, no, no; all's safe; she is in a fit; leave her to her-

herself. (*takes the other candle off the table*) This
way; follow me; make haste. (*going*)

LOVEWORTH.

Away then; let me escape. (*going*)

WATCHIT. (*stopping at the door*).

More misfortunes! your father coming up stairs!

LOVEWORTH.

What brings him again? Is there no door, no
window——

WATCHIT.

Here, here; come this way; stand there. (*places
him at the side of the door*) Don't say a word. (*puts
out the candle*)

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir WILLIAM.

Not here? all in darkness: what is become of
her? (*walking forward*) I left her in this room.

LOVEWORTH.

Fortune, I thank you! I'll get out of his way.
[*Exit.*]

Sir WILLIAM.

If the young dog marries to please his fancy, I
have a right to please mine.

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*within*)

Oh! oh! oh!—help—

Sir WILLIAM.

How? the cry of distress! she is taken ill again I fear: which is the way?

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*within*)

Oh! oh! I shall die.—

Sir WILLIAM.

Zookers! I must relieve her.

WATCHIT.

For the love of mercy, Sir. (*kneels before him*)

Sir WILLIAM.

Another voice?

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*within*)

Oh! oh!—

Sir WILLIAM.

It comes this way: I must go to her assistance. (*runs forward, and tumbles over a chair*) Hey! what the devil is all this?

WATCHIT.

Thieves! murder! all broke into the house: have compassion upon a poor —

(*lays hold of Sir William*)

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

All mad I believe: house; servants; will nobody come?

WATCHIT. (*holding him*)

You shall not have your wicked will: I never will consent: my virtue is all I have to depend upon. Mr. Woodvil; Robert; George.

Sir WILLIAM.

Hey! what's the matter now?

WATCHIT.

Spare my life; spare my honour; spare my innocence.

Sir WILLIAM.

This is the strangest accident!

WATCHIT.

Will nobody come? A parcel of Jews to ruin all Christian virtue.

Enter WOODVIL, with a light.

WATCHIT.

You shall not force me: I never will yield.

WOODVIL.

Hey! what have we here?

Sir

WATCHIT.

Oh! Sir, I am glad you are come, This vile man, I don't know who he is——

WOODVIL.

Sir William!

WATCHIT.

How! Sir William?

Sir WILLIAM.

Mr. Woodvil! You are come most opportunely, Such confusion here!

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*within*)

Oh! will no body bring a light?

WOODVIL.

Hey! more distress! what is the meaning of all this?
[*Exit.*]

WATCHIT. (*rising*)

I could not have thought such wickedness was in you, Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

Hell and confusion! what has possessed you all?

Enter WOODVIL, *leading* Mrs. Woodvil.

WOODVIL.

Don't be frightened, my dear; what is the matter?

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Oh! Mr. Woodvil! — a man lurking in that room; he rushed upon me. He is come to ravish the whole family: it could be for nothing else. I fainted at the sight of him.

WATCHIT.

He did the same to me, Madam, and here is the wolf in sheep's cloathing! Sir William, Madam, it was he——

Sir WILLIAM,

I a wolf in sheep's cloathing!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Yes, now I look at him, it was he.

WATCHIT.

He came upon me, like a destroyer of innocence, and you saw me (*crying*) struggling in defence of my dear, dear virtue,

Sir WILLIAM.

Out of their senses! stark mad! they are bewitched, and bedevilled, I think.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You wicked man to go to deny it! He attacked me in the most furious manner.

WATCHIT.

Yes, and me too, like a tyger, or a mountain bear.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Get a dark room and a bed of straw for 'em both.

WOODVIL.

Sir William, this is a serious matter: what can I think of it?

Sir WILLIAM.

That it is all false, Sir.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

It is all too true.

WATCHIT.

You saw him offering violence to me. (*crying*)

Sir WILLIAM.

Confusion! I tell you it was not so.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I say it was so.

WATCHIT.

And so do I.

Sir WILLIAM.

But I tell you, no.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

And I tell you, yes.

WATCHIT.

And I say, yes, yes, yes.

Sir WILLIAM.

No,—damnation!—no.

All speaking together.

WOOD.

WOODVIL.

Why do you all speak at once?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Hear me, Mr. Woodvil.

WATCHIT.

Let me tell you——

Sir WILLIAM.

No, let me explain——

WOODVIL.

Distraction! will you have patience?

WATCHIT.

He was here, lurking in this room.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No; he was lurking in the other room.

WATCHIT.

Madam; it was here.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I tell you it was there.

Sir WILLIAM.

I say it was no where.

WATCHIT?

He fell first upon me.

All speaking together.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

He began with me.

Sir WILLIAM.

I meddled with neither.

WATCHIT.

I was his first object. (*laughs aside*)

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You his object! hold you your tongue.

WOODVIL.

Hold all your tongues.

WATCHIT.

I must speak for my *vartue*. (*laughing aside*)

Sir WILLIAM.

Damnation! If you keep a mad house, Mr. Woodvil, why would not you tell me so?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Ay! you are found out. And this, my dear Mr. Woodvil, this is not the worst of his treachery. He is married already, and wants now to——

WOODVIL.

Married, Sir William?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I say married: I can prove it. He thinks it a
pro-

profound secret, and he only wants to seduce your niece to her ruin. There is a friend for you!

WATCHIT. (*aside and laughing*)

What a fine puzzle here is?

Sir WILLIAM.

Slander, calumny; I deny it all. I here declare—

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Don't hear him; he will deny this, like every thing else.

Sir WILLIAM.

Distraction! confusion! will you hear me?

[*Watchit talks apart with Woodvil, and both laugh.*]

Enter CLARISSA.

CLARISSA.

For Heaven's sake, what is the matter?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Oh! I am glad you are come: take care of yourself: he is no better than he should be: he means to rob you of your innocence.

CLARISSA.

Madam, I can never think so ill of Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

Generously said, and I thank you. You are the only one of sense among them.

A a 2

WOOD-

WOODVIL. (*aside with Watchit*)

I understand it now: but hush!—no explaining;
let it take its course. [*Watchit and he laugh.*]

CLARISSA.

Sir William is incapable of an improper action, I
am sure he is.

Sir WILLIAM. (*to Clarissa*)

I adore you more than ever.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Watchit, what do you stand laughing there for?
—Step hither; come forward, I say. Did not you
tell me, Watchit, that Sir William is married?

WATCHIT.

Sir William married! I tell you! law! Ma'am—
[*Bursts into a laugh.*]

Mrs. WOODVIL.

She did tell me, and I know it to be true. You
can be a general lover, Sir William:—Mr. Wood-
vil, “he has a seraglio of ladies; and though he
“rails at his son, he has gone lately and married
“one of his Madams, as privately as he could, and
“he thinks nobody knows it.”

Sir WILLIAM.

There again now!

WOODVIL.

What a bustle she has made! (*laughs*)

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Mr. Woodvil, it is no laughing matter: Watchit has told me all: it is just as she says; "he has married his Dulcinea, and all his pretended love in a moment for your niece, is only to deceive her, ruin her, poor dear young girl."

Sir WILLIAM.

All false, idle, absurd: where are your witnesses?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

There, I thought you would be at that work. "The whole parish knows it: but tenants are cautious, and hush-money goes a great way." Does not it, Watchit?

WATCHIT.

I know nothing, Madam; I remember nothing; I understand nothing; but I believe I shall crack my sides with laughing: ho! ho! ho!—— [Exit.

Sir WILLIAM.

There; there; fled the pit!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

But I shall bring her back.—My dearest Mr. Woodvil, it is a serious affair: take care of your niece: it is for the good of your family that I give myself all this trouble. I'll bring the girl back this moment. [Exit.

WOODVIL. (*laughing*)

Well, this is a curious mistake.

Sir WILLIAM.

You allow it to be a mistake ?

WOODVIL.

This story of your marriage, I believe, is without foundation: but your behaviour to my wife, and what I saw with my own eyes between you and the maid——

Sir WILLIAM.

All a mistake too: but tell me plainly, Sir; am I to understand by this, that you evade giving me an answer, or that you don't approve of my asking your niece in marriage ?

WOODVIL.

I have not said that. Win her if you can. That may shew, that you have no unfair designs upon the rest of my family. *[Exit laughing.]*

Sir WILLIAM.

Designs upon his family ! I hope, Madam, that in your thoughts I am honourably acquitted.

CLARISSA.

Of every unfair design it is my duty to acquit you.

Sir WILLIAM.

You make me happy; much happier than you imagine. These foolish people have plagued and perplexed me to that degree, I shall hardly have common sense this week to come. But I still have sense enough to know your merit. Your uncle consents;
you

you heard him say so: and since our passion is mutual——

CLARISSA.

I shall ever respect you, Sir; but as to mutual passion——

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, it is too late to throw a veil over it. Consider; you have acknowledged it.

CLARISSA.

I have acknowledged the sentiments I feel in behalf of your son; must he be ruined, Sir?

Sir WILLIAM.

Never throw away a thought on him: if he is undone, he may thank himself. It would be unnatural in you to plead too much for him and the children of his marriage.

CLARISSA.

Indeed, Sir, if his children are not happy, I shall be miserable, [almost in tears.

Sir WILLIAM.

She speaks feelingly for him. (*aside*)—Po! this is all mistaken generosity. What have you to do with the fellow? Leave him and his wife to repentance and their own misery.

CLARISSA.

But if by coming into your family, I bring calamity on any part of it——

Sir WILLIAM.

You are not to answer for that : it is my act and deed.

CLARISSA.

Can I consent that you should extinguish the natural affections of a father ? What a load of calumny must I take upon myself ? The malice of the world will never cease to persecute me. Let me, therefore, entreat you ; drop your present design : your esteem is all I ask : upon that my happiness is grafted. Could you but know half of what I feel ! my heart is ready to burst in your presence : it is fit you should be informed—This heart, Sir——

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside*)

She alarms me :—go on ; proceed.

CLARISSA.

This heart—it is no longer at my disposal.

Sir WILLIAM.

I know it : you have resigned it generously : Mrs. Woodvil told me so ; you have given away the possession of it.

CLARISSA.

I have, Sir ; and it is never to be recalled. Mine is not a sudden turn of inclination : it is a passion, to which sentiment gave birth ; which reason approves, and gratitude makes a duty.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM. (*bowing respectfully and smiling*)
Madam! you are too good: you do me too much honour.

CLARISSA.

If I could be sure that you will always think so—

Sir WILLIAM.

Rely upon me: I am fixed, unalterably fixed.

CLARISSA.

And will you forgive your son?—Oh! Sir William, if I had power of utterance to tell you but the half of what passes here—(*laying her hand to her breast*) If I could explain to you the interest I take in Mr. Loveworth's welfare—(*turns aside*) Generous, generous Loveworth!

Sir WILLIAM.

Tears!—her generosity is somewhat singular. This warmth of sympathy for a stranger——

CLARISSA.

I cannot help it. Can I think of wadeing into your family through the tears of a ruined son?

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside*)

She has got the day: she has conquered.——I can resist no longer. You have softened me in regard to the fellow, though he does not deserve it. Since you will have it so, I give up the point. I will see my son; I will forget, I'll forgive his folly. He shall be
de.

decently provided for. You shall have all the merit of bringing about this reconciliation. My whole family will be obliged to you. And now, since all your scruples are removed; promise me your consent.

CLARISSA.

Thus much, Sir, I can venture to answer. See Mr. Loveworth; take him once more under your protection; restore him to your esteem and regard; and as to his lady,—if her conduct gives her a claim upon your generosity,—if she has any of the true virtues of a wife to entitle her to favour,—only promise, when you have seen some proof of her merit, that you will then forgive her also,—do this, and I shall reverence you for the goodness you may extend to her.

Sir WILLIAM.

And then you promise me your hand? Do not hesitate.

CLARISSA.

When you have forgiven your son, and seen his lady, if you then persist; if your resolution does not change——

Sir WILLIAM.

Oh!—My resolution can never change.

CLARISSA.

If you then continue in the same mind; if, when your family is settled, you think it proper to ask me in marriage——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM,

You will then consent.

CLARISSA.

You shall, in that case, judge for yourself.

Sir WILLIAM.

Odsbud! you have made me the happiest of men.
I shall be as young a bridegroom as George himself,

CLARISSA. (*aside*)

I dread the end of all this.

Sir WILLIAM,

I have not words to thank you. You have made
me—but I'll say no more——when I am thoroughly
happy, I am wonderfully given to talk nonsense——
loll toll loll. (*sings*)

Enter WATCHIT, Mrs. WOODVIL, and Mr.
WOODVIL.

WATCHIT. (*laughing*)

Oh! gracious! I shall die with laughing.

Mrs. WOODVIL:

Now, Mr. Woodvil, now walk in: now hear
what Watchit has to say.

Sir WILLIAM.

Wounds! the old exploded story again?

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Hear what the girl has to say.

WATCHIT.

I have nothing to say, Madam. Ho! ho! ho!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Nothing to say?

WOODVIL.

No; nothing to the purpose. I understand the whole.

Sir WILLIAM.

Your niece has consented. She has imposed certain conditions; I must see my son: she insists upon it, and I agree. It is all her goodness, and not his merit; and so I shall tell him.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

And will you let your niece marry him?

WOODVIL.

Do you be quiet. I am glad to hear this news, Sir William; and fortunately my friend George is now in the house.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

In the house, and I not know it? How long has he been here?

WOODVIL.

Po! no matter how long: since you are wrought
to

to this disposition, Sir William——Watchit, desire him to walk up stairs.

WATCHIT.

Yes, Sir. This is the luckiest affair. *[Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM.

Mr. Woodvil, you are too precipitate.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Ay; precipitate indeed!

WOODVIL.

Will you disobey the lady's commands? Clarissa, enforce your authority. *[talks apart with Clarissa.*

Sir WILLIAM.

Her commands are absolute: let him come, since it must be so: ay, ay; let me see him.

CLARISSA. *(aside to Woodvil)*

I tremble for the event.

Enter WATCHIT, and LOVEWORTH:

WATCHIT.

Mr. Loveworth, Sir.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

The very person I saw in the other room!

Sir WILLIAM.

There, there; she is growing mad again!

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Mr. Woodvil, if you will believe me——

WOODVIL.

I can't believe you; truce with this absurdity. Sir William, here is your son, Sir.

LOVEWORTH.

To be thus admitted to your presence—

Sir WILLIAM.

You owe it entirely to that lady's goodness. She is the best friend you ever had; that I can tell you.

LOVEWORTH.

I feel that truth too sensibly, and it shall be the endeavour of my life to convince her of my gratitude.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*looking at Loveworth*)

I am sure it was he, whom I saw concealed in the room. (*aside*)

Sir WILLIAM.

If you are ever wanting in due respect to this lady, I shall quarrell with you again. For the present, I shake hands with you: and so all is well.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

He is the very person. Watchit, I am sure of it.

WATCHIT.

Never mind it now, Madam. Won't you see your son's lady, Sir?

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

She is in the house too, I suppose.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No; that she is not: that could not be without my knowing it,

WATCHIT.

I beg your pardon, Ma'am; she is in the house. Introduce her, Mr. Woodvil.

WOODVIL.

Come; Sir William; you agree to see her?

[To Sir William.]

Sir WILLIAM.

You are all in a violent hurry, methinks. Oh! George, if you had chosen such a lady as this. *(pointing to Clarissa)* Do you desire me to see his wife?

CLARISSA.

I don't know how to speak on this occasion.— Thus on my knees I beg forgiveness for all that's past.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, don't kneel to me: let me raise you.

CLARISSA.

No, Sir: I have offended, and this posture is the fittest for me.

Sir WILLIAM.

How! how is this?

CLA-

CLARISSA.

I am the unfortunate person that raised you indignation against your son.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

How! how! what does she say?

Sir WILLIAM.

Do I understand her? Mr. Woodvil,——is your niece my son's wife all this time?

WOODVIL.

That lady is your daughter in law. We have imposed upon you, for the good of your family: It was the pious fraud of friendship, and you will excuse it.

Sir WILLIAM. (*walking aside*)

The young profligate has made a good choice, and robbed me into the bargain.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

This cannot be. She is your niece, Mr. Woodvil, is not she?

WOODVIL.

It served the purpose to call her so.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

At this rate, I have been imposed upon all this time. You are all in a plot against me. I am kept in the dark, and never am to know any thing in this house.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH. (*to Sir William*)

You will allow, Sir, that I have not wanted discernment to make a proper choice.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aside*)

I have a mind to quarrell with him again.—I have been bamboozled in this business. Mr. Woodvil, I appeal to you: am I bound to——

WOODVIL.

Absolutely: and now if you can ask the lady in marriage, she, I suppose, will perform her part of the contract.

Sir WILLIAM.

So! that's the trick, is it?

WOODVIL.

You cannot recede from your word.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Did not you tell me, Watchit, that she was in love with Sir William?

WATCHIT.

It was my mistake; but you see her love does not go out of the family.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You shall tell me every secret: you know more; I know you do. (*talks aside to Watchit*)

Sir WILLIAM.

'Sdeath! I have exposed myself, and they have put it out of my power to find fault. Wounds! I could be in a passion again——And yet I have made myself ridiculous, and so to avoid being laughed at——

CLARISSA.

You perceive my confusion, Sir: I was drawn into this stratagem, and I hope——

SIR WILLIAM.

Well, well; you have deceived me; and after all, it is an agreeable deceit.—But, you baggage! I shall scold you heartily hereafter for the trick you have played me.

WATCHIT. (*aside*)

He is not the first man, whom love has made a reasonable creature.

SIR WILLIAM.

You coquette! you jilt! you false one! I'll lampoon you in all the London papers; I'll write a ballad against you.—Can you look me straight in the face after what has passed between us? George, you have rivalled your father; but I have forgiven you. As she has been a flame of mine, take care that you behave well to her.

WOODVIL.

I will answer for him.

SIR WILLIAM.

It is all for the best perhaps. Don't laugh at me, that is all I ask. And in return, I will fairly own an honest truth: when we become the censors of other people, we make severe laws against ourselves.

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

Which laws we break upon the first occasion that offers.

Sir WILLIAM.

Even so, Sir: and for my part, I now see clearly, that the best way is, to attend, in the first instance, to our own infirmities: we shall learn from thence, to make due allowance for the failings of others.

CLARISSA, comes forward.

*YOU see, good folks, true to the Drama's law,
From these light scenes the moral which we draw.
Look round through life, you'll find the maxim true,
Each blames in others, what himself will do.
Just as the Turk doth from all wine refrain,
And yet with opium stupifies his brain.
E'en here, I fear, here on this very night,
There are who rail, themselves not always right.*

*Pray now above, amongst you gods on high,
To whom so oft I lift a trembling eye;
For whom I strain these tender lungs, still willing
To let you hear a little for your shilling;
Is there no censor there amongst you, pray,
Who blames each new-born folly of the day?
'Gainst foreign lace who doth his thunders lance,
Yet runs his brandy from the coast of France?
Is there no Falstaff, fed with plenteous store,
Who having space enough, still pants for more?
And while six seats he fills with ample make,
Cries, what a deal of room these people take?*

*What num'rous swarms in those mid rows abide,
Moles to themselves, to others eagle-eyed!
Each sees his neighbour's back with follies groan,
But never spies the budget on his own.*

*One instance more : amongst you here i'th' Pit,
Are there no bards, who like an Inquest sit
On murder'd plays, and rave, and fret, and foam,
And DAMN this piece,—yet have a worse at home?*

*This piece no critic here must dare abuse;
For I inspir'd it, I the poet's MUSE! **
*From you, ye fair, he merits some applause;
His scenes were written in your sacred cause;
To guard from wither'd age your beauty's prize,
And bid on nature's laws your conquests rise.*

*Me could he teach this circle how to charm,
And give the pow'r your bosoms to alarm;
'Twere the bright point, at which my thoughts aspire:
What more were left to fan ambition's fire?
She triumphs here, to whom your favour's shewn:
“ There if I grow, the harvest is your own.”*

* The piece was written for Mrs. Yates, and acted on her benefit night, in the month of March 1764.

News from Parnassus.

A N

INTRODUCTORY PIECE,

Performed at the

Opening of Covent-Garden Theatre

O N

MONDAY, the 23d of SEPTEMBER, 1776.

Tum canit errantem Permessi ad Flumina Gallum.

VIRG.

B 3

The P E R S O N S.

BOCCALINI,	Mr. HULL.
RANTWELL, an Actor,	Mr. LEE LEWIS,
VELLUM, a Bookseller,	Mr. WILSON.
REBUS, a Poet,	Mr. QUICK.
CATCALL, a Critic,	Mr. WHITFIELD.
FITZFROLICK, a Pantomime Poet,	Mr. WOODWARD.
LA FLEUR, Servant to Boccalini,	Mr. WEWITZER.
TWO CHAIRMEN.	

Scene BOCCALINI'S Lodgings.

News from Parnassus.

A violent rapping at the Street-Door; from the opposite Side, enter

LA FLEUR.

DE people in dis country it is all mad—rap, rap, rap—knock a de house down! I wish I was again en Provence; (*more knocking at the door*) vat is you would have?—De law in dis country it give liberty; de liberty it is break a de head, break a de house, put Frenchman in de horsepond, vat you will. It is all mad for de news; (*more knocking*) and it will not wait till de news come. Ah ça, I must open door. (*opens the door, and peeps out*) Vat is you want?

PEOPLE *without.*

That odd mortal Boccacini, does he lodge here?

LA FLEUR.

Signior Boccacini, it does lodge here; but you cannot see him now; it has des affaires—(*holding the door, and struggling*) it is not visible to-day.

PEOPLE *without.*

We must see him; we must come in.

Enter RANTWELL and VELLUM.

RANTWELL.

Here's a foreigner without manners ; won't let people in to pay a civil visit !

VELLUM.

We have business with the old critic.

LA FLEUR. (*struggling at the door*)

I will make fast a de door. Ah ! ah ! no more come in. Vat is you command ?

RANTWELL.

Your master is a queer odd sort of a good kind of critic. Boccalini's advertisements from Parnassus are well known. He comes, we hear, with news from those regions, and we want to know what he has in his budget. Is not this he ?

LA FLEUR.

Le voila ! it is Monsieur. I am glad he is come ; he understand your language, and will talk you himself.

Enter BOCCALINI.

BOCCALINI.

Your visit is early, gentlemen, and somewhat importunate.

LA

LA FLEUR.

It is *sans ceremonie*: come in spite of *touts les diables*.

BOCCALINI.

La Fleur, do you step and put my books in order.

LA FLEUR.

Volontier: de gentlemen will pay you Englis visit: how d'you do?—Vat news?—and dat is all.
(sings) *Grand soleil*— [Exit.

BOCCALINI;

Your name, Sir?

RANTWELL.

Rantwell, at your service: you may read it in capitals three times a week in the play-bills.

BOCCALINI,

An actor, perhaps?

RANTWELL.

Righty guessed.

BOCCALINI,

And you, Sir?

VELLUM.

My name is Vellum: a bookseller, Sir; well known in the Row. To refuse me admittance, would have been an error of the first impression.

RANT-

RANTWELL.

And I know my cue when to enter. Well, Signior, you have news from Parnassus, we hear.

BOCCALINI.

Yes, Sir; to be published when I have arranged my materials.

RANTWELL.

Kind and obliging! We have had nothing from those parts a long time. Our Poets seem to have dropped all correspondence with the Muses.

VELLUM.

Ay; and we bookfellers are almost reduced to the necessity of writing for ourselves. Now, Sir, if you will let my paper have the first of your news——

RANTWELL.

A little criticism will do no harm in the beginning of our theatrical season.

BOCCALINI.

Patience, gentlemen. Seneca, Epictetus, and other philosophers, have given me some papers of patience-powder, of more efficacy than all your quack medicines.

RANTWELL.

“The labour we delight in physicks pain.” The truth is our poets are become news-writers, and the bookfellers are grown quacks.

VEL-

VELLUM.

Yes, there are booksellers enough to put off your powders, and you may advertise in my paper. In the mean time, Sir, your news.

RANTWELL.

Ay, true or false, give us the news.

BOCCALINI.

Why must you both speak at once?

RANTWELL.

I hate to be silent in a scene.

BOCCALINI.

But the scene can't go on, if you won't hear. This gentleman excites my curiosity. (*looking at Vellum*) You print a newspaper?

VELLUM.

I do, Sir,

BOCCALINI.

A newspaper is an extraordinary manufacture, but I can form no idea of the process. Bees make wax; worms produce silk; and spiders weave their webs: but what kind of animals engender a newspaper is beyond my skill.

VELLUM.

You foreigners know nothing of the matter: we owe it all to liberty. How do you think it is done?

Boc-

BOCCALINI.

News from all parts of the kingdom! private intelligence from families! accounts from every quarter of the globe!—I suppose, to do all this, you have correspondents abroad, who may be depended upon. If a sudden event happens in a private family, they to be sure give you notice.

VELLUM.

Not a tittle of this. A printing-house is like a bee-hive: some drones there are; the busy fly and buzz abroad in a morning, and return loaded at noon; but they never bring enough; we supply the rest. Troops in America! a letter from thence is writ in my garret. We have in the Merchants Directory, a full list of all the principal names in the city. Now in a dearth of news, we send half a score to Tunbridge, another flight to Margate; a third group to Brighthelmstone. We rob this man on the high-way; we kill another at a city-feast; and we stop payment for a great house, just as we like.

BOCCALINI.

And all false?

VELLUM.

Every syllable.—At the St. James's end of the town, we used to be hard put to it: but difficulties are now removed; their names are all on the street doors; we take them down in our list, and then deal with them as we like. We ruin the eldest son at play, and sometimes shoot him: we ravish the
daugh-

daughter, put the mother to bed with the coachman, hang the father up in the stable, and make a Lord steal half a dozen tea-spoons out of a silver-smith's shop.

BoccALINI.

Don't you observe some degree of probability in your stories?

VELLUM.

Oh! no; the incredible goes down best in this country.

BoccALINI.

But won't the falsehood be found out?

VELLUM.

After some noise; our end is answered first.—A newspaper, Sir, is a great school of science: most of the modern authors have never been at any other. With a good genius for lying, a tolerable stock of malice, a store of envy, and not a grain of literature, they write in the Journals for three or four years; then set up for men of great talents, and from their garrets, or the Fleet, come forth novels, histories, plays, essays upon spirit and matter, whole reams in praise of themselves, and a torrent of abuse against every species of merit.

BoccALINI.

But the plough is defrauded by this.

VELLUM.

That may be: the staining of paper is our object. Now to give you a true idea of the matter; no man can go out of town; or stay at home; or pay his tradesmen, or not pay 'em; live or die, be or not be;

be ; marry or continue single ; no lady can look handsome, be a good wife, a virtuous daughter, or an affectionate mother, but we in our paper turn all topsy turvey, right or wrong, true or false, no matter for that ; we kill the living, bring the dead to life, and represent all just as we please.

BOCCALINI.

And poor truth all this time !

VELLUM.

Have a regard for truth, and starve by it. The paper would be a blank : truth would not fill half a column of the paper. And so, if you please, there's room enough for your news from Parnassus : a good budget of scandal will have a run. I'll stand the brunt.

BOCCALINI.

And will you venture to publish defamation ?

RANTWELL.

I think it's my cue to speak now. I have been silent long enough I think. As to my friend little Vellum, he will dare any thing : his name is well known in Westminster-hall.

VELLUM.

Yes, pretty well, I think. Two verdicts against me last Term ; an Information to be tried next, and only for saying that a man of quality has got his mother with child.

Boc-

BOCCALINI.

Such a trifle as that?

VELLUM.

I said no more. But I laugh at law: I hate the King's Bench; and they know it: "woe to my Lord Chief Justice." I stood in the pillory two years ago.

BOCCALINI.

Indeed!

VELLUM.

I did: nothing in it. I told the mob in hand-bills that the liberty of the press was in danger; and they huzza'd, like the Portugeeze at the burning of a Jew. The pelting was but slight.

BOCCALINI.

But the disgrace! does any body speak to you after it?

VELLUM.

They admire you: I went to the coffee-house without washing the eggs off my face. Look ye; you can't have a better publisher: secrecy warranted; never give up an author; you may murder characters, and compliment yourself just as you please in my Journal.

BOCCALINI.

I understand you: Parnassus is invited to a share in scandal and malevolence: you shall have my answer presently. And now, a word with this gentleman.

RANT-

RANTWELL.

Ay, you have kept me here a long time, without a speech ; and that, let me tell you, is the hardest thing in acting.

BOCCALINI.

Then you should study it. But come ; you are an actor, and you profess to please ?

RANTWELL.

Yes, Sir ; I profess to please, and it is cruel in any newspaper to say, I don't please. If idleness, or a party to Salt-hill, or a quarrel with the Manager, hinders me from studying my part, why should any scribbler inform the world of it ? If I don't like my wife, or if I like another man's wife better, why is a printer, a dirty, snivelling, sneaking fellow, like Vellum there—

VELLUM.

If you go to that, shall a paltry player—

RANTWELL.

A paper and type rascal !

VELLUM.

A king of shreds and patches !

RANTWELL.

A mere bundle of fools-cap !

VELLUM.

A blustering, ranting, spouting—

RANT-

RANTWELL.

A duodecimo of waste paper.

BOCCALINI.

Nay! friends but this moment, and now—

RANTWELL.

Let him give up the point then. Shall such a fellow as that dine upon my follies? I hope, Signior, that you have an advertisement from Parnassus, ordering, in the name of Apollo, that no newspaper shall say a word of us, who depend upon pleasing the public.

BOCCALINI.

And what say you of those who profess to serve the public?

RANTWELL.

Why, as we very often please nobody but ourselves, so your Ministers as often serve nobody but themselves; and therefore with quack doctors, money lenders, and lottery offices, they are all fair game.

VELLUM.

I like to hear actors talk of pleasing the public!

RANTWELL.

Do you compare newspapers to a theatre?

VELLUM.

Do I?—What do we print lies for but to please the public?

RANTWELL.

Print no lies of us: but come, let us hear your news: as Sir Harry says, the news! tell me news.

VELLUM.

If you don't tell, I'll invent news for you.

RANTWELL.

And now I think on't; Roscius, you know, has left the stage; is not Shakespeare hugely angry?

BOCCALINI.

Angry?—At what?

RANTWELL.

At Roscius, for retiring?

BOCCALINI.

No, Sir: Shakespeare retired himself to the banks of the *Avon*, and he wishes Roscius a happy retreat on the banks of the *Thames*. Apollo has decreed him a laurel-crown for his services, and has promised him a new wreath, should he again appear for the theatrical fund, or upon any other occasion.

VELLUM.

This is bad news.

BOCCALINI.

Why so?

VELLUM.

No abuse in it: dull truth is a drug: I'll say in
the

AN INTRODUCTORY PIECE. 403

the paper, that Shakespeare never thought him a good actor : he preferred Betterton, and Booth, and—

BOCCALINI.

He says the reverse, and calls him his best commentator.

RANTWELL.

What better than Booth, Wilkes, or Cibber?

BOCCALINI.

He was much obliged to them all : they sprung from Betterton, as in ancient times, many Hercules's grew out of one. But Roscius has reversed it : out of many theatrical Hercules's he made one in his own person.

VELLUM.

This will never do. There will be no dispute about this : no *pro and con* : and *pro and con* is the life of a newspaper. Essays, letters, squibs, paragraphs, epigrams——

BOCCALINI.

Then it is your interest to be in the wrong?

VELLUM.

You have hit the mark. It is the interest of every newspaper in England to be in the wrong. If I say alderman Guzzledown went a swan-hopping, and tumbled out of a city barge into the Thames, and when taken up, all help was too late ; then alderman Guzzledown's friends are in a rage, and they come to my house, and “ alderman Guzzledown, Sir, does

not understand"—and so then they put an answer in the paper, that he never went a swan-hopping at all, and I get somebody to abuse the answer, with a hint about smuggling; and so a paper war goes on—

[a rapping at the door.]

BOCCALINI.

More visitors! if you will step into the next room, gentlemen—whom have we here?

Enter REBUS.

RANTWELL.

Ha! little Rebus! Signior Boccalini, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Rebus, an admirable poet! He has writ a comedy. My dear Rebus, you are the man to revive a drooping stage. I hope you have a part for me. *(turns to Boccalini)* A poor sentimental blockhead; I hope his play will never be received. My dear Rebus, if your piece comes out, you may depend upon me. Come, Vellum, they want to be busy.

VELLUM.

If your play comes out, send the plot to my paper. You may praise yourself there, as much as you will: and I'll take care to abuse you.

[Exit with Rantwell.]

BOCCALINI.

You are a dramatic author, Sir?

RE-

REBUS.

I am Sir. My first push will be in comedy.

BOCCALINI.

And for this I suppose you have prepared yourself by an accurate study of men and manners: you have attended to the humours that gather in the mind, and the tinge those humours are apt to give to the imagination. You have pursued affectation through all her shapes, and can open with a nice hand the vileness of the ridicule that springs from that source. You have seen life, you know the foibles of the fair; the turns of vanity, pride, love, extravagance, and all the whims of fashion. You know the relative duties of life, and——

REBUS.

At that rate, when should I begin to write my comedy?

BOCCALINI.

At Athens they were forbid before the age of thirty. I make no doubt, but you have digested Aristotle, and all the rules of your art.

REBUS.

A man might as well study the mathematicks. I trust all to genius: the managers have enlarged the house: it holds more money than ever, and that is provocation enough for me.

BOCCALINI.

Will that do? A painter studies the principles of design and colouring before he takes a pallet.

REBUS.

Look ye, Sir: you saw that fellow Vellum that went out there?—I wrote for five years in his paper. And that fellow, Rantwell, who is gone with him, he supplied me with orders to see the play. A bitter bad actor! he shall never speak a line of mine. I have attended the first night at all new plays; I have watched effect; observed where the audience applauded; gave the plot in the papers, abused every successful writer, and now have turned one of my own novels into a comedy. No wit, no humour in it!

BOCCALINI.

No?

REBUS.

Wit and humour are good for nothing but to make people laugh.

BOCCALINI.

A new notion this: what's your subject?

REBUS.

You shall hear:—My notion is that there should be found doctrine throughout; in every scene good and generous sentiments; rising in a climax to some usefull moral in every act.—Now observe—my first act ends with “honour your father and mother.” II. Act, “love your neighbour as yourself.”—III. Act, “do as you would be done by”—IV. Act, “charity covers a multitude of sins”—V. Act, “God save the king”—No audience can hiss such sentiments.

Boc-

BOCCALINI.

They might as well hiss “the practice of piety.”

REBUS.

Just the same: my play is pathetic——

BOCCALINI.

A pathetic comedy?——

REBUS.

Yes, a pathetic comedy! the story is shortly this. Sophy Goodchild is an amiable girl: she has many lovers; Lutestring, a mercer's prentice; Capias, an attorney's clerk; and Jack Indigo, a young merchant.—Her father was formerly church-warden, now old, poor, and starving! he has not a morsel to eat. Sophy Goodchild sees a baker's shop: she resolves, but after many soliloquies, to steal a two-penny loaf for her father. The young attorney sees her in the fact, and being crossed in love, he informs. Sophy is carried before Mr. Justice Locust. Mr. Justice Locust is a wine-merchant, who sells bad law, and adulterate port to the whole parish. Miss Sophy is brought before him: she weeps; confesses the fact, and is committed to Newgate. Mr. Justice Locust makes out a warrant for the father, for receiving stolen goods, knowing them to be stolen: young Indigo takes their part, and young Indigo's father, whose whole delight in his counting house is to do good, raises a subscription to make Sophy's defence. She is brought to her trial, and her father with her. She makes a speech; the jury cry, and both are acquitted, she marries young Indigo, and his father settles

settles his whole fortune upon them, which you know is very generous and improbable: and so the audience go away crammed with sentiment, and highly delighted with so pathetic a piece.

BOCCALINI.

Have the Managers received this comedy?

REBUS.

No; they are insolent; but till they comply, I shall abuse them, and every thing they produce.

BOCCALINI.

Had not you better turn your comedy into a tragedy?

REBUS.

No, no; I have a tragedy upon the stocks. An Eastern story. I call it Nuncomar.—Nuncomar has forged the bond of Malachi Dofs, and so contrives to possess himself of his whole fortune, as soon as Malachi Dofs dies. Malachi Dofs has left a daughter, secretly in love with Gungabassen.—Gungabassen fetches a walk at midnight near the *Adawlut*, with an *arzee* in his hand. The ghost of Malachi Dofs appears, and being of the Gentoo religion, gives a fine awfull relation of the Metempsychosis. The ghost discovers the whole fraud, and how he lent his seal to be put to an *arzee*, to be sent to the Nabob, NUTCHUM AL DOWLA, under whom Malachi Dofs had a *forje-durree*. Gungabassen tells all to the young princess; the interest grows warm, and Nuncomar is sent to prison: his wife is in great affliction, and this again heightens the distress. Nuncomar breaks out of the
prison

prison into the council room, and claims the privilege of an ambassador as *Vakeel* to the Nabob: then follow some speeches about the rights of ambassadors, and the statute of queen Ann is put into blank verse. In the midst of things the Nabob comes with all his whole army: a battle is fought and won: Nutchum al Dowla is brought in prisoner upon an elephant: Nuncomar is executed, and his wife, according to the custom of the East, mounts the funeral pile, which is lighted up on the stage, and so the play concludes, with a moral against forgery, highly usefull in a commercial country.

BOCCALINI,

Will the audience understand it?

REBUS.

Not a syllable: they'll stare like stuck pigs: I like to see 'em stare at a tragedy. And then by culling from Shakespeare a parcel of obsolete words——

BOCCALINI.

Obsolete words in dialogue, that should be natural?

REBUS.

Yes, it is the rule for supporting the diction, in all poetry; particularly with respect to the drama. I shall give my countrymen something beyond the reach of malice. (*loud rapping at the door*)

BOCCALINI,

Hey! more visitors!

RE-

REBUS.

Well, I can step into the next room. I shall finish my tragedy. Nuncomar will make 'em stare: with *smart imps*, and *dapper elves*, and *goblins* of the night, and the *nursing hours* of the morning, I shall make work for them. (*repeats*)

Here Nuncomar with NIRONs from the West,
There Gungabassen marshals all his NAIMANS;
And sits aloft in thunder and in clouds!
Hey!—little Rebus will do it! [Exit.

Enter CATCALL.

CATCALL.

Ha! old boy!

BOCCALINI.

Your name, Sir?

CATCALL.

Catcall: a critic; and as you are of the same trade, I am come to have a little talk with you.

BOCCALINI.

Upon what subject?

CATCALL.

The reformation of theatrical abuses.

BOCCALINI.

The true province of criticism!

CAT-

CATCALL.

Yes, Sir: I was born a critic. I hissed the moment I saw the light. I rejected all play-things, till a catcall was put into my hand: that delighted me. When I took to my horn-book, the first letters I learned were, D, A, M, N, which make the word *Damn* you know. From school, I came upon town; lounged at coffehouses, read magazines, laid down the laws of the drama at George's, and pronounced upon wit at the Bedford.

BOCCALINI.

Good materials for a critic! now to the point.

CATCALL.

If you please, Sir: the affair is this. The Managers are grown insolent: now I shall set my face against all insolence.

BOCCALINI.

Proceed, Sir.

CATCALL.

Time was, I could go into the boxes and see an entire act of a play for nothing. At the close of the act, the box-keeper came in, "I hope your honour likes the piece, and if you stay,"—Stay, says me I,—to see a play murdered? Up I get, and brush away to the other house, and there do the same. Now this good ancient custom has been some how taken away. It must be revived. I know a cabinet-maker that has no business; I know a discontented master-taylor, who can bring all his journeymen into the upper-
gal-

gallery. We shall call ourselves the town. No trifling with our rights. And now, Sir, I hope that you will by an edict from Parnassus revive the good and ancient privilege of seeing an act at each house for nothing.

BOCCALINI.

And is this all you have to complain of?

CATCALL.

No, no, have patience; this is not all. The town has been abridged of many privileges. For instance now; after seeing two acts, without paying a farthing, it then draws near to half price, you know. Then supposing me willing to pay, I could march behind the scenes; see all their thunder and lightning; strut into the Green-room, and by talking to the performers make them all forget their parts, and then, lolling with a janty air against the side of the scene, hiss the actors for their negligence, and laugh the ladies in the boxes out of countenance.

BOCCALINI.

This must make great confusion.

CATCALL.

Charming confusion!—A babel of sounds. Off cries the pit; throw him over says the gallery; musick; a hornpipe, prologue; roast beef. All this is lost now.

BOCCALINI.

And this is what you would restore?

CAT-

CATCALL.

I fear we shall not be able to carry the point: but it will breed a riot, and that, you know, is rare sport. *[a rap at the door.]*

Enter LA FLEUR.

BOCCALINI.

What is the matter now?

LA FLEUR.

De gentleman in de chair. He will not come out. He has great mystery; and so de chair it must be carry in here.

BOCCALINI.

As he pleases. Mr. Catcall, there is company in that room to entertain you.

CATCALL.

Let us first discuss——

BOCCALINI.

Sir, my time——

CATCALL.

And, Sir, my time is precious.

BOCCALINI.

You see I am not at leisure.

CAT-

CATCALL. (*retiring*)

A word, and I have done.

BOCCALINI.

How inconsiderate! leave me now.

[*Exit Catcall.*]

(*A Chair is brought in*)

I. CHAIRMAN.

Will I lave the chair in the hall here?

II. CHAIRMAN.

What better place? Did not the gentleman desire it? Ow! come along, man.

[*Exeunt Chairman.*]

BOCCALINI.

What can this mean?

FITZFROLICK. (*looking out of the chair*)

By ourselves, I hope.

BOCCALINI.

The coast is clear, you see.

FITZFROLICK.

Then I'll venture out. (*comes out of the chair; a large red cloak on him, and a tie wig.*)

BOCCALINI.

By his appearance this should be a doctor of physick.

FITZ-

FITZFROLICK.

No, Sir, I have no *nostrums*: my name is Fitzfrolick.

BOCCALINI.

And your profession?

FITZFROLICK.

A pantomime poet.

BOCCALINI.

A pantomime poet! what may that be?

FITZFROLICK.

You may well ask: the ancients had but an imperfect notion of it: I can tell the whole story of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* better than Ovid himself.

BOCCALINI.

Better than Ovid! is the English a better language than the Latin?

FITZFROLICK.

We never use any language. Significant dumb shew is our method. How would you tell a man, without speaking, to bring you some cherries? (*mimicks*) Nuts? (*mimicks*) Does any language come up to that?

BOCCALINI.

The critics can't find fault with your stile: pray, Sir, how did you attain this excellence?

FITZ-

FITZFROLICK.

I was bred a carpenter.

BOCCALINI.

A carpenter !

FITZFROLICK.

Yes : I built a booth for a puppet-shew-man in the country, and ever since I have been a dealer in pantomime. I have made all the heathen gods and goddeses. The chairs, that danced a jig in *Dioclesian*, were my handy work.

BOCCALINI.

An ingenious contrivance !

FITZFROLICK.

A better set of actors were never put out of hand. I have been a slave to the drama ever since, and I have suffered much inconvenience in the cause. Would you believe it ? I have never been able to stay a week in any one lodging for these twenty years.

BOCCALINI.

Why so ?

FITZFROLICK.

I practise all my pieces at home. The life of pantomime, you know, consists in the escapes of Harlequin. I have bored holes in the doors and wain-scott in every house I could get into. I once got into a sad scrape. Pantaloon was in pursuit of me—that is you must suppose so—I jumped through the wain-scott,

scott, and tumbled into my landlady's bed ; but that
 sulky scoundrel her husband bastinado'd me, till I
 thought I never should take a leap again. I have
 been practising all the morning : ecce signum !

*[throws off his long cloak, puts on a mask and appears
 in a harlequin-dress.]*

BOCCALINI.

A quick metamorphosis !

FITZFROLICK. *(frisks about)*

I may unmask to you. I have been practising a
 new pantomime. " Harlequin Argonaut, or the
 Golden Fleece." I shall lower the stage ; make a fine
 bason ; get the New River company to turn in their
 water ; and then I shall launch a ship, and sail away
 for Colchos.

BOCCALINI.

But why real water in scenes merely artificial ?

FITZFROLICK.

I'll tell you : I tried it with a canvass-sea ; but
 while the men were turning the wheels to give undu-
 lation to the drapery of the water, I fell in and almost
 broke my rib against the sharp corner of a wave. So
 I intend to have real water.

BOCCALINI.

But in real water you may chance to be drown'd

FITZFROLICK.

No, no ; that can't be. The society for curing
 drowned persons is to attend in the front boxes. I

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shall

shall sail away, do you see, for Colchos, and upon my arrival fire a broadside at the castle, silence their guns, and——

BOCCALINI.

Guns ! they were not in use.

FITZFROLICK.

Oh ! harlequin deals with the devil you know. I meet Medea on the shore, and take her that night to Vauxhall.

BOCCALINI.

Vauxhall in those days ?

FITZFROLICK.

I am master of my own creation. I then take her to the Boulevards at Paris ; give her a Dutch fair upon the ice ;---I make my ice of tin.---Pantaloone, her father, with a long nose, a grey beard, and a knife in his hand, pursues me : præsto pass, I have a basket on my shoulder. “ Buy any muffins ? Muffins for “ coffee and tea, gentlemen and ladies.”

BOCCALINI.

Nothing of this in Ovid.

FITZFROLICK.

My changes are more wonderful than his. My wit is full as surprizing : though, I think, my wit is not above five feet high at present.

BOCCALINI.

Wit five feet high !

FITZ-

FITZFROLICK.

No ; I could spring ten-feet formerly ; but a five bar gate is the height of my wit at present.

BOCCALINI.

So ! you are vulnerable in the heel ?

FITZFROLICK.

Yes, Achilles for that. I shall give great variety. I have hunted all the signs in London for animals that never existed : I shall give 'em all. ASTLEY shall ride his horse ; a Turk shall mount the rope ; I have spoke to the stationer for a large quantity of snow, and you will have ostriches, serpents of the Nile, the Ægyptian pyramids, and I change myself to a Mummy.

Enter all the former Characters.

RANTWELL.

Hey ! that fellow intrude himself here !

REBUS.

That enemy of wit !

RANTWELL.

He never gives me a line to speak.

CATCALL.

Turn him out.

D d 2

VEL.

VELLUM.

A scoundrel that never prints his works !

OMNES.

Turn the fellow out. (*Fitzfrolick runs about, and leaps through a window*)

BOCCALINI.

I am glad to be rid of him. I have no rules for his species of the drama. And now, gentlemen, you shall, in your turns, hear the decrees of Apollo and the muses. The public shall have them soon in my old way ; in the form of advertisements from Parnassus. In the mean time, to our present purpose. Mr. Vellum——

VELLUM.

I will print for you in a good type.

BOCCALINI.

Listen, Sir, if you please. A year's collection of newspapers has been perused by Momus, and he has made his report. They exceed in bulk all the writings of antiquity put together, and they make a curious medley. The works of the ancients were called the physick of the soul : modern newspapers are the poison. Apollo leaves the superintendance of this matter to English juries. He says, when a set of libertines, from the people called the LOCRIANS, broke into a temple, after a night's carousal, and defiled the altar ; an edict was passed at ATHENS declaring it lawful for the LOCRIANS to defile the temples : In like manner, Parnassus allows the newspapers to traduce

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and

and vilify whom they think fit. The temples in Greece continued sacred, in spite of indecency; and the valuable character may bid defiance to scurrility.

VELLUM.

Look into Poets Corner next Saturday for an epigram upon yourself.

BOCCALINI.

Mr. Rantwell, you profess to please; study to do it. Let actors write no verses on themselves; no paragraphs against their rivals; avoid frivolous dispute, and attend to their business. If the wasps of the newspapers bite and sting, remember that those little envenomed animals are generally most busy in the sunshine.

RANTWELL.

I'll tell this in the Green-room: It may do some good.

BOCCALINI.

Mr. Rebus, a comedy was meant to be the mirror of life. "The proper study of mankind is man." True comedy serves that purpose: it helps to develop the discriminations of character, and to laugh folly out of countenance. Pathetic comedy is a mere substitute for wit, humour, and the powers of ridicule. Fustian tragedy is another subterfuge. Shakespeare wrote naturally: his language, in all his beautiful passages, is the language of this hour. Why should you write, as if you was born two hundred years ago? The antique cast is a mere trick in writing. Imitate nature; be simple, without meannesses; adorn-

adorned, without ostentation; touch the heart, and that is your sure road to success.

REBUS.

I appeal to posterity.

FITZFROLICK. (*in the chair.*)

Any directions for me?

OMNES.

Hey!—Is he here again?

BOCCALINI.

There is no keeping him out, I see.

CATCALL.

He shall decamp for all this: here, call in the chairmen.

Enter Chairmen; as they are going to take up the chair, it flies open, and discovers an Apothecary's shop; an Alligator comes out; Harlequin is dressed as a Quack Doctor. The Alligator moves about the stage.

CATCALL.

What monster have we here?

REBUS.

A description of it in good blank-verse will do well in a tragedy.

VELLUM.

I should like a print of it for the next Magazine.

RANT.

RANTWELL.

“An alligator stult: a beggarly account of empty boxes.”

BOCCALINI. (*when the alligator stops.*)

Mr. Fitzfrolick, this is a specimen of your talents. Your species of composition eludes all precept. Will a little common sense do you any kind of harm?

FITZFROLICK.

Shall I be plain with you? I have tried various shapes to gratify my masters. An old servant, Sir! within the limits of common sense, I hope, my endeavours have not been always unworthy. I have occasionally been prodigal enough to depart from nature; but I have had the grace to return. To please has been my ambition; and sometimes trusting to my HEAD, and sometimes to my HEELS, I have reached the chearful evening of life; and if my patrons will now and then continue to bestow a smile, it will chear me on the rest of my way.

BOCCALINI.

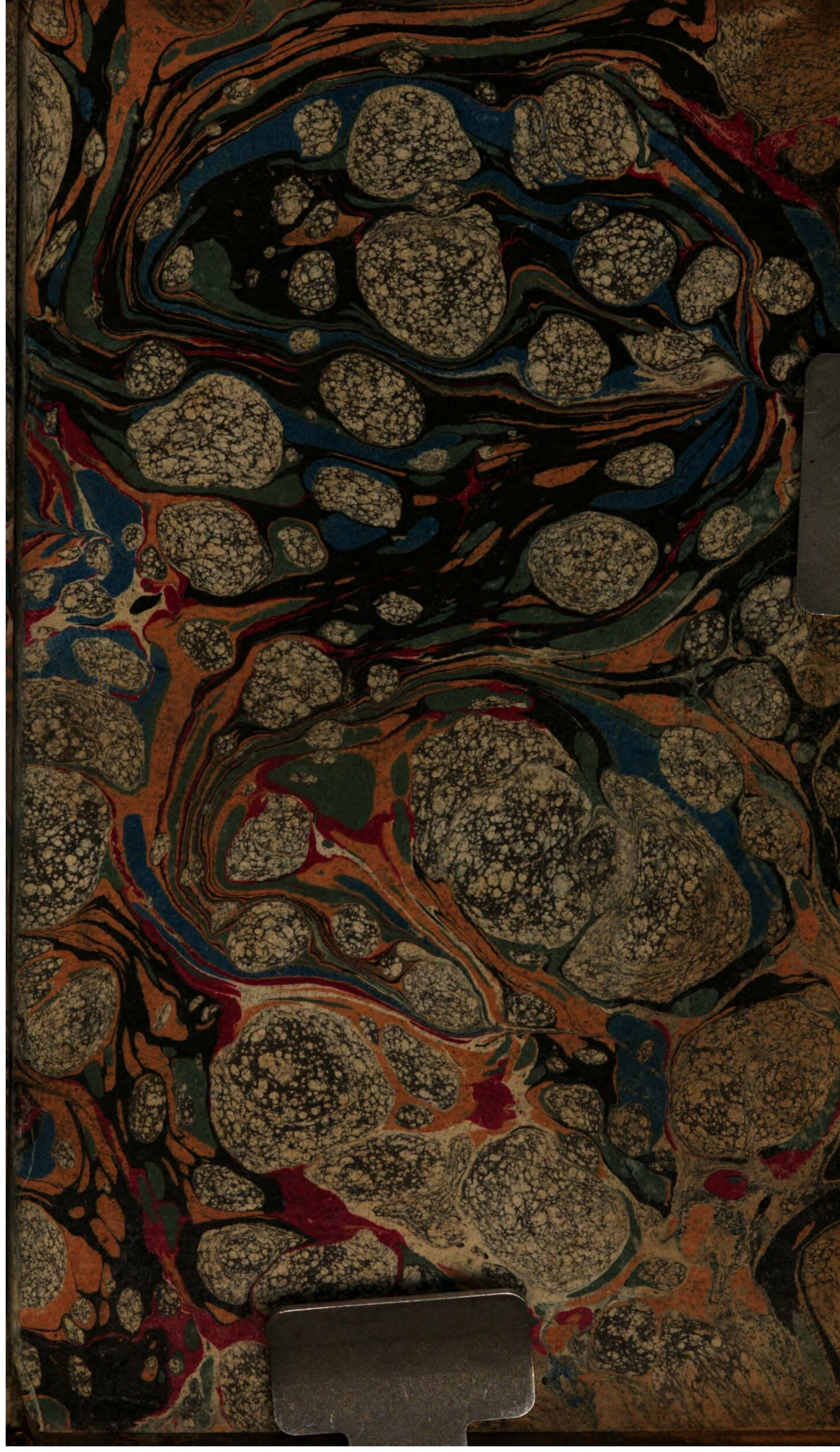
Fairly spoken, and I dare say you will have your wish. Mr. Catcall, a word with you, Sir. Banish noise and riot: let critics have knowledge and candour. A true son of Apollo has well observed, that the first office of criticism was to beat time to the chorus of the muses, not with clamour and violence to interrupt the song. Let audiences support the decorum of the theatre. Let the managers procure novelty, by a due encouragement of genius. If new plays of value cannot be had, let them revive the old, but be sparing of alterations. They may
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lop excrescencies, and remove indecency; but the form in which the fathers of the drama left their works, shews their own frame of thought, and ought to be respected. In a word, let Managers consider themselves at the head of a great warehouse; procure the best assortment of goods, get proper hands to display them; open their doors, be civil to the customers, and, Apollo foretells that the generosity of the public will reward their endeavours. [*Exeunt omnes.*

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